

L E T T E R S
O N T H E
I M P R O V E M E N T
O F T H E
M I N D,
A D D R E S S E D T O A Y O U N G L A D Y.

I CONSIDER AN HUMAN SOUL WITHOUT EDUCATION, LIKE MARBLE IN THE QUARRY, WHICH SHEWS NONE OF ITS INHERENT BEAUTIES TILL THE SKILL OF THE POLISHER FETCHES OUT THE COLOURS, MAKES THE SURFACE SHINE, AND DISCOVERS EVERY ORNAMENTAL CLOUD, SPOT, AND VEIN THAT RUNS THROUGH THE BODY OF IT. EDUCATION, AFTER THE SAME MANNER, WHEN IT WORKS UPON A NOBLE MIND, DRAWS OUT TO VIEW EVERY LATENT VIRTUE AND PERFECTION, WHICH WITHOUT SUCH HELPS ARE NEVER ABLE TO MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE.

ADDISON.

I N T W O V O L U M E S.

B y M r s. C H A P O N E.

T H E S E C O N D E D I T I O N.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N:

Printed by H. HUGHES,
For J. WALTER, Homer's Head, Charing-Cross,
MDCCLXXIII.

252

My dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to inform you, my dear

Sir, that the above of which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which



253

My dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to inform you, my dear

Sir, that the above of which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

is now in your hands and which

LETTER VI.

THE next great point of importance to your future happiness, my dear, is what your parents have, doubtless, been continually attentive to from your infancy, as it is impossible to undertake it too early — I mean the due Regulation of your Temper. Though you are in great measure indebted to their forming hands for whatever is good

VOL. II.

B

in

2 *On the Government of the Temper.*

in it, you are sensible, no doubt, as every human creature is, of propensities to some infirmity of temper, which it must now be your own care to correct and to subdue; otherwise the pains that have hitherto been taken with you may all become fruitless: and, when you are your own mistress, you may relapse into those faults, which were originally in your nature, and which will require to be diligently watched and kept under, through the whole course of your life.

If you consider, that the constant tenor of the gospel precept is to promote love, peace, and

good

On the Government of the Temper. 3

good-will amongst men, you will not doubt that the cultivation of an amiable disposition is a great part of your religious duty; since nothing leads more directly to the breach of charity, and to the injury and molestation of our fellow creatures, than the indulgence of an ill temper. Do not therefore think lightly of the offences you may commit, for want of a due command over it, or suppose yourself responsible for them to your fellow creatures only; but, be assured, you must give a strict account of them all to the Supreme Governor of the world, who has made

4 *On the Government of the Temper.*

this a great part of your appointed trial upon earth.

A woman, bred up in a religious manner, placed above the reach of want and out of the way of forbidden or scandalous vices, can have but a few temptations to the flagrant breach of the divine laws. It particularly concerns her therefore to understand them in their full import, and to consider, how far she trespasses against them, by such actions as appear trivial, when compared with murder, adultery, and theft, but which become of very great importance, by being frequently

requently repeated, and occuring in
the daily transactions of life.

The principal virtues or vices of
a woman must be of a private and
domestic kind. Within the cir-
cle of her own family and depen-
dants lies her sphere of action —
the scene of almost all those tasks
and trials, which must determine
her character, and her fate, here,
and hereafter. Reflect, for a mo-
ment, how much the happiness of
her husband, children, and ser-
vants, must depend on her temper,
and you will see that the greatest
good, or evil, which she ever may
have in her power to do, may arise

6 *On the Government of the Temper.*

from her correcting or indulging
its infirmities.

Though I wish the principle of
duty towards God to be your ruling
motive in the exercise of every vir-
tue, yet, as human nature stands in
need of all possible helps, let us not
forget how essential it is to present
happiness, and to the enjoyment of
this life, to cultivate such a tem-
per as is likewise indispensably re-
quisite to the attainment of higher
felicity in the life to come. The
greatest outward blessings cannot
afford enjoyment to a mind ruffled
and uneasy within itself. A fit of
ill humour will spoil the finest en-
ertain-

tainment, and is as real a torment as the most painful disease. Another unavoidable consequence of ill temper is the dislike and aversion of all who are witnesses to it, and, perhaps, the deep and lasting resentment of those, who suffer from its effects. We all, from social or self-love, earnestly desire the esteem and affection of our fellow creatures; and indeed our condition makes them so necessary to us, that the wretch, who has forfeited them, must feel desolate and undone, deprived of all the best enjoyments and comforts the world can afford, and given up to his inward misery, unpitied and scorned.

8 *On the Government of the Temper.*

ed. But this never can be the fate
of a good-natured person: what
ever faults he may have, they will
generally be treated with lenity
he will find an advocate in every
human heart; his errors will be la-
mented rather than abhorred; and
his virtues will be viewed in the
fairest point of light: His good hu-
mour, without the help of great ta-
lents or acquirements, will make
his company preferable to that of
the most brilliant genius, in whom
this quality is wanting: in short
it is almost impossible that you can
be sincerely beloved by any body
without this engaging property
whatever other excellencies you
may

ber. *On the Government of the Temper.* 9

ne fat may possess ; but, with it, you will
what scarcely fail of finding some friends
ey will and favourers, even though you
lenity should be destitute of almost every
ever other advantage.

be la-
; and Perhaps you will say, “ all this is
in the very true, but our tempers are not
od hu- in our own power — we are made
eat ta- with different dispositions, and,
make if mine is not amiable, it is rather
hat do my unhappiness than my fault.”
whom This, my dear, is commonly
short said by those who will not take
ou can the trouble to correct themselves.
body Yet, be assured, it is a delusion,
perty and will not avail in our justifica-
you tion before him, “ who knoweth
may “ whereof we are made,” and of
what

10 *On the Government of the Temper.*

what we are capable. It is true, we are not all equally happy in our dispositions; but human virtue consists in cherishing and cultivating every good inclination, and in checking and subduing every propensity to evil. If you had been born with a bad temper, it might have been made a good one, at least with regard to its outward effects, by education, reason, and principle: and, though you are so happy as to have a good one while young, do not suppose it will always continue so, if you neglect to maintain a proper command over it. Power, sickness, disappointments, or worldly cares, may corrupt

On the Government of the Temper. II

rupt and embitter the finest disposition, if they are not counteracted by reason and religion.

It is observed, that every temper is inclined, in some degree, either to passion, peevishness, or obstinacy. Many are so unfortunate as to be inclined to each of the three in turn : it is necessary therefore to watch the bent of our nature, and to apply the remedies proper for the infirmity to which we are most liable. With regard to the first, it is so injurious to society, and so odious in itself, especially in the female character, that one would think shame alone would

12 *On the Government of the Temper.*

would be sufficient to preserve a young woman from giving way to it; for it is as unbecoming her character to be betrayed into ill behaviour by *passion*, as by *intoxication*, and she ought to be ashamed of the one, as much as of the other. Gentleness, meekness, and patience, are her peculiar distinctions, and an enraged woman is one of the most disgusting sights in nature.

It is plain, from experience, that the most passionate people can command themselves, when they have a motive sufficiently strong — such as the presence of those they fear,

or

erve a or to whom they particularly desire
ay to to recommend themselves: it is
cha- therefore no excuse to persons,
beha- whom you have injured by un-
ation, kind reproaches, and unjust asper-
d of sions, to tell them you was in a
ther. passion: the allowing yourself to
pa- speak to them in passion is a proof
ions, of an insolent disrespect, which the
e of meanest of your fellow creatures
na- would have a right to resent.
When once you find yourself heated
so far as to desire to say what you
that know would be provoking and
om- wounding to another, you should
have immediately resolve rather to be
such silent, or to quit the room, than
ear, to give utterance to any thing dic-
or tated

tated by so bad an inclination. *gr*
assured, you are then unfit to re *cu*
son or to reprove, or to hear reason *m*
from others. It is therefore your *an*
part to retire from such an occasi *sp*
of sin; and, wait till you are co *te*
before you presume to judge *al*
what has passed. By accustoming *g*
yourself thus to conquer and disa *ju*
point your anger, you will by d *u*
grees find it grow weak and m *ti*
nageable, so as to leave your reason *o*
at liberty: You will be able to r *e*
strain your tongue from evil, and *t*
your looks and gestures from a *a*
expressions of violence and ill-wil *l*
Pride, which produces so man *y*
evils in the human mind, is th *e*
gre

Great source of passion. Whoever cultivates in himself a proper humility, a due sense of his own faults and insufficiencies, and a due respect for others, will find but small temptation to violent or unreasonable anger.

In the case of real injuries, which justify and call for resentment, there is a noble and generous kind of anger, a proper and necessary part of our nature, which has nothing in it sinful or degrading. I would not wish you insensible to this; for the person, who feels not an injury, must be incapable of being properly affected by benefits.

With

16 *On the Government of the Temper.*

With those, who treat you ill without provocation, you ought to maintain your own dignity. But in order to do this, whilst you shew a sense of their improper behaviour, you must preserve calmness, and even good breeding—and thereby convince them of their impotence as well as injustice of their malice. You must always weigh every circumstance with candour and charity, and consider whether your shewing the resentment deserved may not produce consequences to innocent persons—as is almost always the case in family quarrels—and whether it may not occasion the breach of some duty.

with necessary connection, to which
you ought to sacrifice even your
But resentments. Above all things,
take care that a particular offence
never be you does not make you unjust to
calm the general character of the offend-
ing person. Generous anger does
not preclude esteem for whatever is
justly estimable, nor does it de-
stroy good-will to the person of its
subject: It even inspires the de-
sire of overcoming him by benefits,
and wishes to inflict no other pu-
ishment than the regret of hav-
ing injured one, who deserved his
kindness: it is always placable,
and ready to be reconciled, as soon
as the offender is convinced of his

18 *On the Government of the Temper*
error; nor can any subsequent
jury provoke it to recur to
disobligations, which had been
forgiven. But it is perhaps un-
necessary to give rules for this
The consciousness of injured
cense naturally produces digni-
and usually prevents excess of
ger. Our passion is most un-
when we are conscious of blame
and when we apprehend that
have laid ourselves open to
tempt. Where we know we
been wrong, the least injustice
the degree of blame imputed to
excites our bitterest resentment
but, where we know ourself
faultless, the sharpest accusa-

On the Government of the Temper. 19

excites pity or contempt, rather than rage. Whenever therefore you feel yourself very angry, suspect yourself to be in the wrong, and resolve to stand the decision of your own conscience before you cast upon another the punishment, which is perhaps due to yourself. This self-examination will at least give you time to cool, and, if you are just, will dispose you to balance your own wrong with that of your antagonist, and to settle the account with him on equal terms.

Peevishness, though not so violent and fatal in its immediate ef-

20 *On the Government of the Temper.* O
fects, is still more unamiable than
passion, and, if possible, more destruc
structive of happiness, in as much
as it operates more continually.
Though the fretful man injures more
less, he disgusts us more than the
passionate one — because he betrays
a low and little mind, intent on
trifles, and engrossed by a paltry
self-love, which knows not how to
bear the very apprehension of a
inconvenience. It is self-love then
which we must combat, when we
find ourselves assaulted by this
firmity; and, by voluntarily
during inconveniencies, we should
habituate ourselves to bear them
with ease, and good-humour, which
occ

ble occasioned by others. Perhaps this
more the best kind of religious mortifi-
cation, as the chief end of deny-
ing ourselves any innocent indul-
gences must be to acquire a habit
of command over our passions and
inclinations, particularly such as
are likely to lead us into evil.
Another method of conquering this
enemy is to abstract our minds
from that attention to trifling cir-
cumstances, which usually creates
this uneasiness. Those who are en-
gaged in high and important pur-
suits are very little affected by
the small inconveniencies. The man
whose head is full of studious
thought, or whose heart is full of
care,

22 *On the Government of the Temper.*

care, will eat his dinner with
knowing whether it was well
dressed, or whether it was
punctually at the hour or not :
though absence from the com-
things of life is far from desir-
— especially in a woman — yet
minute and anxious an attention
them seldom fails to produce a
ing, mean, and fretful disposi-
I would therefore wish your
to have always some objects
pursuit worthy of it, that it
not be engrossed by such as are
themselves scarce worth a moment
anxiety. It is chiefly in the decli-
of life, when amusements fail, and
when the more importunate passions

As passions subside, that this infirmity is
observed to grow upon us — and
perhaps it will seldom fail to do so,
unless carefully watched and coun-
teredacted by reason. We must then
endeavour to substitute some pur-
suits in the place of those, which
can only engage us in the beginning
of our course. The pursuit of
glory and happiness in another life,
by every means of improving and
exalting our own minds, becomes
more and more interesting to us,
the nearer we draw to the end of
all sublunary enjoyments. Read-
ing, reflection, rational conversa-
tion, and, above all, conversing
with God, by prayer and medita-
tion,

tion, may preserve us from taking that anxious interest in the life, comforts and conveniencies of the remaining days, which usually gives birth to so much fretfulness in old people. But though the aged and infirm are most liable to this evil, and they alone are to be pitied for it—yet we sometimes see the young, the healthy, and those who enjoy the most outward blessings, inexcusably guilty of it. The smallest disappointment in pleasure, or difficulty in the most trifling employment will put wilful young people out of temper, and their very amusements frequently become sources of vexation and peevishness. Hob

of

often have I seen a girl, preparing
for a ball, or for some other pub-
lic appearance — unable to satisfy
her own vanity — fret over every or-
nament she put on, quarrel with
her maid, with her clothes, her
hair; and growing still more un-
satisfied as she grew more cross, be-
come ready to fight with her looking-
glass for not making her as hand-
some as she wished to be. She did
not consider that the traces of this
difficult humour on her countenance
would be a greater disadvantage to
her appearance than any defect in
her dress — or even than the plainest
features enlivened by joy and good
humour. There is a degree of re-
signation

signation necessary even to the enjoyment of pleasure; we must be ready and willing to give up some part of what we could wish for, before we can enjoy that which is indulged to us. I have no doubt that she, who frets all the while she is dressing for an assembly, will suffer still greater uneasiness when she is there. The same craving restless vanity will there endure a thousand mortifications, which, in the midst of seeming pleasure, will secretly corrode her heart; while the meek and humble generally find more gratification than they expected, and return home pleased and enlivened from every

fear

to the scene of amusement, though they
must could have staid away from it with
up for perfect ease and contentment.

for, but
ch is Sullenness, or obstinacy, is per-
haps a worse fault of temper than
either of the former — and, if in-
dulged, may end in the most fatal
extremes of stubborn melancholy,
malice, and revenge. The resent-
ment which, instead of being ex-
pressed, is nursed in secret, and
continually aggravated by the ima-
gination, will, in time, become the
ruling passion; and then, how
horrible must be his case, whose
kind and pleasurable affections are
all swallowed up by the tormenting
as

28 *On the Government of the Temper.*

as well as detestable sentiments (he
 hatred and revenge!—" * Adm
 " nish thy friend, peradventure he qu
 " hath not done it: or if he hath by
 " that he do it no more. — Adm
 " nish thy friend, peradventure he
 " hath not said it: or if he hath bl
 " that he speak it not again." — er
 Brood not over a resentment, which
 perhaps was at first ill grounded
 and which is undoubtedly height
 tened by an heated imagination.
 But, when you have first subdued
 your own temper, so as to be able
 to speak calmly, reasonably, and
 kindly, then expostulate with the
 person you suppose to be in fault—

* Ecclus. xix. 13.

hear

ents hear what she has to say; and
Adm either reconcile yourself to her, or
ture quiet your mind under the injury,
e hat by the principle of Christian chari-
Adm ty. But if it should appear that
ture by you yourself have been most to
e hat blame, or if you have been in an
in." error, acknowledge it fairly and
which handsomely; if you feel any re-
unded ductance to do so, be certain that
height it arises from pride, to conquer
nation which is an absolute duty.—“A
bdue “soft answer turneth away wrath,”
be ab and a generous confession often-
, and times more than atones for the
th the fault which requires it. Truth and
ault—justice demand that we should ac-
knowledge conviction, as soon as
hear we

30 *On the Government of the Temper,*
we feel it, and not maintain
erroneous opinion, or justify
wrong conduct, merely from
false shame of confessing our
ignorance. A false shame it
doubtedly is, and as impolitic
unjust, since your error is already
seen by those who endeavour to
you right; but your conviction
and the candour and generosity
of owning it freely, may
be an honour to you, and would
greatly recommend you to the person
with whom you disputed. With
a disposition strongly inclined to
leness, or obstinacy, this must
a very painful exertion; and
make a perfect conquest over you

self at once may perhaps appear impracticable, whilst the zeal of self justification, and the abhorrence of blame, are strong upon you. But, if you are so unhappy as to yield to your infirmity, at one time, do not let this discourage you from renewing your efforts. Your mind will gain strength from the contest, and your internal enemy will by degrees be forced to give ground. Be not afraid to revive the subject, as soon as you find yourself able to subdue your temper; and then frankly lay open the conflict you sustained at the time: by this you will make all the amends in your power for

for your fault, and will certainly change the disgust you had given into pity at least if not admiration. Nothing is more endearing than such a confession — after you will find such a satisfaction in your own consciousness, and in the renewed tenderness and esteem you will gain from the person concerned, that your task for the future will be made more easy, and your reluctance to be convinced, will on every occasion grow less and less.

The love of truth, and a real desire of improvement, ought to be the only motives of argument.

certain; and, where these are sincere, had no difficulty can be made of embracing the truth, as soon as it is endeared. But, in fact, people — oftener dispute from vanity and action, which make it a grievous mortification to allow that we are wiser for what we have heard from another. To receive advice, the sureproof, and instruction, properly, and the surest sign of a sincere and humble heart — and shews a greatness of mind, which commands our respect and reverence, while it appears so willingly to yield to us a superiority.

34 *On the Government of the Temple*

Observe, notwithstanding, that I do not wish you to hear of your faults without pain : Such a difference would afford small hope of amendment. Shame and repentance are the first steps to true repentance ; yet we should be willing to bear this pain, and thank the kind hand that inflicts it for our good. Nor must we, by a silent silence under it, leave our physician in doubt, whether his operation has taken effect or whether it has not added another malady, instead of curing the first. You must consider, that those who tell you of your faults, if

ing, that it from motives of kindness
r of d not of malice, exert their
uch an endship in a painful office, which
small lust have cost them as great an ef-
nd rent as it can be to you to ac-
true knowledge the service; and, if you
ld be use this encouragement, you can-
d that expect that any one, who is
flicts it absolutely obliged to it by du-
ve, by, will a second time undertake
e our ch an ill-requited trouble. What
hether loss would this be to yourself! —
ect or w difficult would be our pro-
ded an ess to that degree of perfection,
g the hich is necessary to our happi-
that ss, was it not for the assistance
lts, if e receive from each other! — this
ertainly is one of the means of

36 *On the Government of the Temper*
grace held out to us by our mi-
ful judge, and, if we reject it,
are answerable for all the mis-
ages we may fall into for
of it.

I know not, whether that fir-
caprice, that inequality of taste
behaviour, so commonly attrib-
to our sex, may be properly
a fault of temper — as it seems
to be connected with, or ar-
from our animal frame, but
rather the fruit of our own se-
dulgence, degenerating by de-
into such a wantonness of w-
knows not how to please
When, instead of regulating

tions by reason and principle,
suffer ourselves to be guided by
every slight and momentary impulse
inclination, we shall, doubtless,
appear so variable and inconstant,
that nobody can guess, by our be-
haviour to-day, what may be ex-
pected from us to-morrow; nor
can we ourselves tell whether what
we are delighted in, a week ago, will
now afford us the least degree of
pleasure. It is in vain for others
to attempt to please us — we can-
not please ourselves, though all we
could wish for waits our choice:
and thus does a capricious woman
come “sick of herself, through
very selfishness:” And, when

38 *On the Government of the Temp*

this is the case, it is easy to j
how sick others must be of
and how contemptible and di
ing she must appear. This wi
ed state is the usual consequen
power and flattery. May my
child never meet with the ter
tion of that excessive and ill-j
indulgence from a husband,
she has happily escaped from
parents, and which seldom fa
reduce a woman to the mis
condition of a humoured chil
ways unhappy from having
dy's will to study but its own
insolence of such demands for
self, and such disregard t
choice and inclinations of

an seldom fail to make you as
many enemies as there are persons
obliged to bear with your humours ;
hilt a compliant, reasonable,
and contented disposition, would
render you happy in yourself, and
loved by all your companions —
particularly by those, who live con-
stantly with you ; and, of what
consequence this is to your happi-
ness, a moment's reflection will
convince you. Family friendships
are the friendships made for us, if
may so speak, by God himself.
With the kindest intentions, he has
knit the bands of family love, by
indispensable duties ; and wretch-
ed are they who have burst them

asunder by violence and ill-will, or by worn them out by constant little disobligations, and by the want of that attention to please, which the presence of a stranger always inspires, but which is often so shamefully neglected towards those, where it is most our duty and interest to please. May you, my dear, be wise enough to see that every faculty of entertainment, every engaging qualification, which you possess, is exerted to the best advantage for those, whose love is of most importance to you — for those who live under the same roof, and with whom you are connected for life, either by the ties of blood, or

by the still more sacred obligations
of a voluntary engagement.

To make you the delight and
darling of your family, something
more is required than barely to be
exempt from ill temper and trou-
blesome humours. The sincere
and genuine smiles of complacency
and love must adorn your counte-
nance. That ready compliance,
that alertness to assist and oblige,
which demonstrates true affection,
must animate your behaviour,
and endear your most common
actions. Politeness must accom-
pany your greatest familiarities, and
restrain you from every thing that
is

is really offensive, or which can give a moment's unnecessary pain. Conversation, which is so apt to grow dull and insipid in families, may, in some to be almost wholly laid aside, must be cultivated with the frankness and openness of friendship, and by the mutual communication of whatever may conduce to the improvement or innocent entertainment of each other.

Reading, whether apart or in common, will furnish useful and pleasing subjects; and the sprightliness of youth will naturally inspire harmless mirth and native humour, if encouraged by a mutual desire

desire of diverting each other, and making the hours pass agreeably in your own house: every amusement that offers will be heightened by the participation of these dear companions, and by talking over every incident together and every object of pleasure. If you have any acquired talent of entertainment, such as music, painting, or the like, your own family are those, before whom you should most wish to excel, and for whom you should always be ready to exert yourself; not suffering the accomplishments which you have gained, perhaps by their means, and at their expence, to lie dormant, till the arrival of a stranger

44 *On the Government of the Temper.*

stranger gives you spirit in the performance. Where this last is the case, you may be sure vanity is the only motive of the exertion: A stranger will praise you more: But how little sensibility has that heart which is not more gratified by the silent pleasure painted on the countenance of a partial parent, or of an affectionate brother, than by the empty compliments of a visiter who is perhaps inwardly more disposed to criticise and ridicule than to admire you.

I have been longer in this letter than I intended, yet it is with difficulty I can quit the subject, because I

think

per. On the Government of the Temper. 45
think it is seldom sufficiently insisted on, either in books or in sermons—and because there are many persons weak enough to believe themselves in a safe and innocent course of life, whilst they are daily harrassing every body about them by their vexatious humours. But, you will, I hope, constantly bear in mind, that you can never treat a fellow creature unkindly, without offending the kind Creator and Father of all—and that you can no way render yourself so acceptable to him as by studying to promote the happiness of others, in every instance, small as well as great.—
The favour of God, and the love
of

46 *On the Government of the Temper.*

of your companions, will surely be deemed rewards sufficient to animate your most fervent endeavours yet this is not all: the disposition of mind, which I would commend, is its own reward, and is in itself essential to happiness. Cultivate it therefore, my dear child, with your utmost diligence — and watch the symptoms of ill temper, as they rise, with a firm resolution to conquer them, before they are even perceived by any other person. In every such inward conflict, call upon your Maker, to assist the feeble nature he hath given you — and sacrifice to *Him* every feeling that would tempt

you to disobedience : So will you at length attain that true Christian meekness, which is blessed in the sight of God and man ; “ which “ has the promise of this life as “ well as of that which is to “ come.” Then will you pity, in others, those infirmities, which you have conquered in yourself ; and will think yourself as much bound to assist, by your patience and gentleness, those who are so unhappy as to be under the dominion of evil passions, as you are to impart a share of your riches to the poor and miserable.

Adieu, my dearest.

LETTER VII

MY DEAR NIECE,

ECONOMY is so important a part of a woman's character, so necessary to her own happiness and so essential to her performing properly the duties of a wife and of a mother, that it ought to have the precedence of all other accomplishments, and take its rank next to the first duties of life. It is, moreover, an *art* as well as a *virtue* — and many well-meaning persons, from ignorance, or from inconsideration, are strangely

cient in it. Indeed it is too often wholly neglected in a young woman's education — and, she is sent from her father's house to govern a family, without the least degree of that knowledge, which should qualify her for it: this is the source of much inconvenience; for though experience and attention may supply, by degrees, the want of instruction, yet this requires time—the family, in the mean time, may get into habits, which are very difficult to alter; and, what is worse, the husband's opinion of his wife's incapacity may be fixed too strongly to suffer him ever to think justly of her gradual

improvements. I would therefore earnestly advise you to make use of every opportunity you can find for the laying in some store of knowledge on this subject, before you are called upon to the practice by observing what passes before you — by consulting prudent and experienced mistresses of families — by entering in a book a memorandum of every new piece of intelligence you acquire: you afterwards compare these with mature observations, and you make additions and corrections as you see occasion. I hope it will not be long before your mother trusts you with some part, at least

of the management of your father's
house. Whilst you are under her
eye, your ignorance cannot do
much harm, though the relief to
her at first may not be near so
considerable as the benefit to
yourself.

Economy consists of so many
branches, some of which descend to
such minutenesses, that it is impos-
sible for me in writing to give you
particular directions. The rude
outlines may perhaps be described,
and I shall be happy if I can fur-
nish you with any hint that may
hereafter be usefully applied.

The first and greatest point is to lay out your general plan of living in a just proportion to your fortune and rank : if these two will not coincide, the last must certainly give way ; for, if you have right principles, you cannot fail of being wretched under the sense of the injustice as well as danger of spending beyond your income, and your distress will be continually increasing. No mortifications, which you can suffer from retrenching in your appearance, can be comparable to this unhappiness. If you would enjoy the real comforts of affluence, you should lay your plan considerably within your income ;

income; not for the pleasure of amassing wealth — though, where there is a growing family, it is an absolute duty to lay by something every year—but to provide for contingencies, and to have the power of indulging your choice in the disposal of the overplus — either in innocent pleasures, or to increase your funds for charity and generosity, which are in fact the true funds of pleasure. In some circumstances indeed, this would not be prudent: there are professions, in which a man's success greatly depends on his making some figure, where the bare suspicion of poverty would bring on the reality. If,

by marriage, you should be placed in such a situation, it will be your duty to exert all your skill in the management of your income : Yet, even in this case, I would not strain to the utmost for appearance but would choose my models among the most prudent and moderate of my own class ; and be contented with slower advancement, for the sake of security and peace of mind.

A contrary conduct is the ruin of many ; and, in general, the wives of men in such professions might live in a more retired and frugal manner than they do, without

out any ill consequence, if they did not make the scheme of advancing the success of their husbands an excuse to themselves for the indulgence of their own vanity and ambition.

Perhaps it may be said, that the settling the general scheme of expences is seldom the wife's province, and that many men do not choose even to acquaint her with the real state of their affairs. Where this is the case, a woman can be answerable for no more than is entrusted to her. But, I think it a very ill sign, for one or both of the parties, where there is such a

want of openness, in what equally concerns them. As I trust you will deserve the confidence of your husband, so I hope you will be allowed free consultation with him on your mutual interests; and, I believe, there are few men, who would not hearken to reason on their own affairs, when they saw a wife ready and desirous to give up her share of vanities and indulgences and only earnest to promote the common good of the family.

In order to settle your plan, it will be necessary to make a pretty exact calculation: and if, from
this

this time, you accustom yourself to calculations in all the little expences entrusted to you, you will grow expert and ready at them, and be able to guess very nearly, where certainty cannot be attained. Many articles of expence are regular and fixed; these may be valued exactly; and, by consulting with experienced persons, you may calculate nearly the amount of others: any material article of consumption, in a family of any given number and circumstances, may be estimated pretty nearly. Your own expences of clothes and pocket-money should be settled and circumscribed, that
you

you may be sure not to exceed the just proportion. I think it an admirable method to appropriate such a portion of your income, as you judge proper to bestow in charity, to be sacredly kept for that purpose, and no longer considered as your own. By which means, you will avoid the temptation of giving less than you ought, through selfishness, or more than you ought, through good nature or weakness. If your circumstances allow of it, you might set apart another fund for acts of liberality or friendship, which do not come under the head of charity. The having such funds ready at hand makes it
easy

easy and pleasant to give; and, when acts of bounty are performed without effort, they are generally done more kindly and effectually. If you are obliged in conscience to lay up for a family, the same method of an appropriated fund for saving will be of excellent use, as it will prevent that continual and often ineffectual anxiety, which a general desire of saving, without having fixed the limits, is sure to create.

Regularity of payments and accounts is essential to Economy: — your house-keeping should be settled at least once a week, and all
the

the bills paid : all other tradesmen should be paid, at farthest, once a year. Indeed I think it more advantageous to pay oftener : but, if you make them trust you longer, they must either charge proportionably higher, or be losers by your custom. Numbers of them fail, every year, from the cruel cause of being obliged to give their customers so much longer credit than the dealers, from whom they take their goods, will allow to them. If people of fortune considered this, they would not defer their payments, from mere negligence, as they often do, to the ruin of whole families.

You

You must endeavour to acquire skill in purchasing : in order to this, you should begin now to attend to the prices of things and take every proper opportunity of learning the real value of every thing, as well as the marks whereby you are to distinguish the good from the bad.

In your table, as in your dress, and in all other things, I wish you to aim at *propriety* and *neatness*, or, if your state demands it, *elegance*, rather than *superfluous figure*. To go beyond your sphere, either in dress, or in the appearance of your table, indicates

cates a greater fault in your character than to be too much within it. It is impossible to enter into the *minutiae* of the table: good sense and observation on the best models must form your taste, and a due regard to what you can afford must restrain it.

Ladies, who are fond of needlework, generally choose to consider that as a principal part of good housewifery: and, though I cannot look upon it as of equal importance with the due regulation of a family, yet, in a middling rank, and with a moderate fortune, it is a necessary part of a woman's duty,

duty, and a considerable article in expence is saved by it. Many young ladies make almost *every thing* they wear; by which means they can make a genteel figure at a small expence. This, in your station, is the most profitable and desirable kind of work; and, as much of it as you can do, consistently with a due attention to your health, to the improvement of your mind, and to the discharge of other duties, I should think highly commendable. But, as I do not wish you to impose on the world by your appearance, I should be contented to see you worse dressed, rather than see your whole time employed
in

in preparations for it, or any of those hours given to it, which are needful to make your body strong and active by exercise, or your mind rational by reading. Absolute idleness is inexcusable in a woman, because the needle is always at hand for those intervals, in which she cannot be otherwise employed. If you are industrious, and if you keep good hours, you will find time for all your proper employments. Early rising, and a good disposition of time, is essential to economy. The necessary orders, and examination into household affairs, should be dispatched, as soon in the day, and

as

as privately as possible, that they may not interrupt your husband or guests, or break in upon conversation, or reading, in the remainder of the day. If you defer any thing that is necessary, you may be tempted by company, or by unforeseen avocations, to forget, or to neglect it: hurry and irregularity will ensue, with expensive expedients to supply the defect.

There is in many people, and particularly in youth, a strange aversion to regularity — a desire to delay what ought to be done immediately, in order to do something else, which might as well be done

afterwards. Be assured, it is of more consequence to you than you can conceive, to get the better of this idle procrastinating spirit, and to acquire habits of constancy and steadiness, even in the most trifling matters: without them there can be no regularity, or consistency of action or character — no dependance on your best intentions, which a sudden humour may tempt you to lay aside for a time, and which a thousand unforeseen accidents will afterwards render it more and more difficult to execute: no one can say what important consequences may follow a trivial neglect of this kind. For exam-

ple — I have known one of these *procrastinators* disoblige, and gradually lose very valuable friends, by delaying to write to them so long, that, having no good excuse to offer, she could not get courage enough to write at all and dropped their correspondence entirely.

The neatness and order of your house and furniture is a part of Economy which will greatly affect your appearance and character, and to which you must yourself give attention, since it is not possible even for the *rich* and *great* to rely wholly on the care of servants, in such points, without their being of

ten neglected. The more magnificently a house is furnished, the more one is disgusted with that air of confusion, which often prevails where attention is wanting in the owner. But, on the other hand, there is a kind of neatness, which gives a lady the air of a housemaid, and makes her excessively troublesome to every body, and particularly to her husband: in this, as in all other branches of Economy, I wish you to avoid all parade and bustle. Those ladies, who pique themselves on the particular excellence of neatness, are very apt to forget that the decent order of the house should be designed

signed to promote the convenience and pleasure of those who are to be in it; and that, if it is converted into a cause of trouble and constraint, their husbands and guests would be happier without it. The love of fame, that universal passion, will sometimes shew itself on strangely insignificant subjects; and a person, who acts for praise only, will always go beyond the mark in every thing. The best sign of a house being well governed is that nobody's attention is called to any of the little affairs of it, but all goes on so well of course that one is not led to make remarks upon any thing, nor to observe any ex-

Bongil.

F. 3

traor-

traordinary effort that produces the general result of ease and elegance, which prevails throughout.

Domestic Economy, and the credit and happiness of a family, depend so much on the choice and proper regulation of servants, that it must be considered as an essential part both of prudence and duty. Those, who keep a great number of them, have a heavy charge on their consciences, and ought to think themselves in some measure responsible for the morals and happiness of so many of their fellow-creatures, designed like themselves for immortality.

Indeed

Indeed the cares of domestic management are by no means lighter to persons of high rank and fortune, if they perform their duty, than to those of a retired station. It is with a family, as with a commonwealth, the more numerous and luxurious it becomes, the more difficult it is to govern it properly. — Though the great are placed above the little attentions and employments, to which a private gentlewoman must dedicate much of her time, they have a larger and more important sphere of action, in which, if they are indolent and neglectful, the whole government of their house and fortune must fall into irregularity.

Whatever number of deputies they may employ to overlook their affairs, they must themselves overlook those deputies, and be ultimately answerable for the conduct of the whole. The characters of those servants, who are entrusted with power over the rest, cannot be too nicely enquired into; and the mistress of the family must be ever watchful over their conduct—at the same time that she must carefully avoid every appearance of suspicion, which, whilst it wounds and injures a worthy servant, only excites the artifice and cunning of an unjust one.

None,

None, who pretend to be friends of religion and virtue, should ever keep a domestic, however expert in business, whom they know to be guilty of immorality. How unbecoming a serious character is it, to say of such an one, "he is a bad man, but a good servant!" — What a preference does it shew of private convenience to the interests of society, which demand that vice should be constantly discountenanced, especially in every one's own household; and that the sober, honest, and industrious, should be sure of finding encouragement and reward, in the houses of those who maintain respectable characters.

Such

Such persons should be invariably strict and peremptory with regard to the behaviour of their servants, in every thing which concerns the general plan of domestic government — but should by no means be severe on small faults, since nothing so much weakens authority as frequent chiding. Whilst they require precise obedience to their rules, they must prove by their general conduct, that these rules are the effect, not of humour but, of reason. It is wonderful that those, who are careful to conceal their ill-temper from strangers, should be indifferent how peevish and even contemptibly capricious they

they appear before their servants, on whom their good-name so much depends, and from whom they can hope for no real respect, when their weakness is so apparent. When once a servant can say—"I cannot do any thing to please my mistress to-day"—all authority is lost.

Those, who continually change their servants, and complain of perpetual ill-usage, have good reason to believe that the fault is in themselves, and that they do not know how to govern. Few indeed possess the skill to unite authority with kindness, or are capable

ble of that steady and uniformly reasonable conduct, which alone can maintain true dignity and command a willing and attentive obedience. Let us not forget that human nature is the same in all stations. If you can convince your servants, that you have a generous and considerate regard to their health, their interest, and their reasonable gratifications — that you impose no commands but what are fit and right, nor ever reprove but with justice and temper — Why should you imagine that they will be insensible to the good they receive, or whence suppose them incapable of esteeming and priz-

ing such a mistress? — I could never, without indignation, hear it said that “servants have no gratitude” — as if the condition of servitude excluded the virtues of humanity! — The truth is, masters and mistresses have seldom any real claim to gratitude. They think highly of what they bestow and little of the service they receive: they consider only their own convenience, and seldom reflect on the kind of life their servants pass with them: they do not ask themselves, whether it is such an one as is consistent with the preservation of their health, their morals, their leisure for religious duties, or with a pro-
per

per share of the enjoyments and comforts of life. The dissipated manners, which now so generally prevail, perpetual absence from home, and attendance on assemblies or at public places, is, in all these respects, pernicious to the whole household — and to the *men servants* absolutely ruinous. Their only resource, in the tedious hours of waiting, whilst their masters and ladies are engaged in diversions, is to find out something of the same kind for themselves. Thus are they led into gaming, drinking, extravagance, and bad company — and thus, by a natural progression, they become distressed and dishonest.

That

That attachment and affiance, which ought to subsist between the dependant and his protector, are destroyed. The master looks on his attendants as thieves and traitors, whilst they consider him as one, whose money only gives him power over them — and, who uses that power, without the least regard to their welfare.

* “ The fool saith — I have no
“ friends—I have no thanks for all
“ my good deeds, and they that eat
“ my bread speak evil of me.” —
Thus foolishly do those complain,
who choose their servants, as well

• Ecclus. xx. 16.

as their friends, without discretion, or who treat them in a manner that no worthy person will bear.

I have been often shocked at the want of politeness, by which masters and mistresses sometimes provoke impertinence from their servants: a gentleman, who would resent to death, an imputation of falsehood from his equal, will not scruple, without proof, to accuse his servant of it, in the grossest terms. I have heard the most insolent contempt of the whole class expressed at a table, whilst five or six of them attended behind the chairs, who, the company seemed

to

to think, were without senses, without understanding, or the natural feelings of resentment: these are cruel injuries and will be retorted in some way or other.

If you, my dear, live to be at the head of a family, I hope, you will not only avoid all injurious treatment of your domestics, but behave to them with that courtesy and good-breeding, which will heighten their respect as well as their affection. If, on any occasion, they do more than you have a right to require, give them, at least, the reward of seeing that

they have obliged you. If, in your service, they have any hardship to endure, let them see that you are concerned for the necessity of imposing it. When they are sick, give them all the attention and every comfort in your power, with a free heart and kind countenance; “* not blemishing thy good
“ deeds, nor using uncomfortable
“ words, when thou givest any
“ thing. Is not a word better
“ than a gift?—but both are with
“ a gracious man! — A fool will
“ upbraid churlishly, and a gift of
“ the envious consumeth the eyes.”

*.Ecclus. xviii.

Whilst

Whilst you thus endear yourself to all your servants, you must ever carefully avoid making a favourite of any; unjust distinctions, and weak indulgences to one, will of course excite envy and hatred in the rest. Your favourite may establish whatever abuses she pleases; none will dare to complain against her, and you will be kept ignorant of her ill practices, but, will feel the effects of them, by finding all your other servants uneasy in their places, and perhaps, by being obliged continually to change them.

When they have spent a reasonable time in your service, and have

behaved commendably, you ought to prefer them, if it is in your power, or to recommend them to a better provision. The hope of this keeps alive attention and gratitude and is the proper support of industry. Like a parent, you should keep in view their establishment in some way, that may preserve their old age from indigence; and, to this end, you should endeavour to inspire them with care to lay up part of their gains, and constantly discourage in them all vanity in dress, and extravagance in idle expences. That you are bound to promote their eternal as well as temporal welfare, you cannot doubt, since, next to
your

your children, they are your nearest dependants. You ought therefore to instruct them as far as you are able, furnish them with good books suited to their capacity, and see that they attend the public worship of God: and you must take care so to pass the sabbath day as to allow them time, on that day at least, for reading and reflection at home, as well as for attendance at church. Though this is a part of your religious duty, I mention it here, because it is also a part of family management: for the same reason, I shall here take occasion earnestly to recommend family prayers, which are useful to all, but most particu-

larly to servants—who, being constantly employed, are led to the neglect of private prayer—and whose ignorance makes it very difficult for them to frame devotions for themselves, or to choose proper helps, amidst the numerous books of superstitious or enthusiastic nonsense, which are printed for that purpose. Even, in a political light, this practice is eligible, since the idea, which it will give them of your regularity and decency, if not counter-acted by other parts of your conduct, will probably increase their respect for you, and will be some restraint, at least on their outward behaviour, though it should fail of
that

that inward influence, which in general may be hoped from it.

The prudent distribution of your charitable gifts may not improperly be considered as a branch of Economy, since the great duty of almsgiving cannot be truly fulfilled without a diligent attention so to manage the sums you can spare as to produce the most real good to your fellow-creatures. Many are willing to give money, who will not bestow their time and consideration, and who therefore often hurt the community, when they mean to do good to individuals. The larger are your funds, the stronger is the call

upon you to exert your industry and care in disposing of them properly. It seems impossible to give rules for this, as every case is attended with a variety of circumstances that must all be considered. In general, charity is most useful, when it is appropriated to animate the industry of the young, to procure some ease and comforts to old age, and to support in sickness those whose 'daily labour is their only maintenance in health. They, who are fallen into indigence, from circumstances of ease and plenty, and in whom education and habit have added a thousand wants to those of nature, must be considered with
the

the tenderest sympathy, by every feeling heart. It is needless to say that to such the bare support of existence is scarcely a benefit — and that the delicacy and liberality of the manner, in which relief is here offered, can alone make it a real act of kindness. In great families, the waste of provisions, sufficient for the support of many poor ones, is a shocking abuse of the gifts of providence : Nor should any lady think it beneath her to study the best means of preventing it, and of employing the refuse of luxury in the relief of the poor. Even the smallest families may give

give some assistance in this way, if care is taken that nothing be wasted.

I am sensible, my dear child, that very little more can be gathered from what I have said on Economy, than the general importance of it, which cannot be too much impressed on your mind, since the natural turn of young people is to neglect and even despise it; not distinguishing it from parsimony and narrowness of spirit. But be assured, my dear, there can be no true generosity without it; and that the most enlarged and liberal mind will find itself not debased but ennobled

ennobled by it. Nothing is more common than to see the same person, whose want of Economy is ruining his family, consumed with regret and vexation at the effect of his profusion; and, by endeavouring to save, in such trifles as will not amount to twenty pounds in a year, that which he wastes by hundreds, incur the character and suffer the anxieties of a miser, together with the misfortunes of a prodigal. A rational plan of expence will save you from all these corroding cares, and will give you the full and liberal enjoyment of what you spend. An air of ease, of hospitality and frankness will reign in
your

your house, which will make it pleasant to your friends and to yourself. “Better is a morsel of bread,” where this is found, than the most elaborate entertainment, with that air of constraint and anxiety, which often betrays the grudging heart through all the disguises of civility.

That you, my dear, may unite in yourself the admirable virtues of Generosity and Economy, which will be the grace and crown of all your attainments, is the earnest wish of

Your ever affectionate.

L E T T E R V I I I .

WHILST you labour to enrich your mind with the essential virtues of Christianity — with piety, benevolence, meekness, humility, integrity, and purity — and to make yourself useful in domestic management, I would not have my dear child neglect to pursue those graces and acquirements, which may set her virtue in the most advantageous light, adorn her manners, and enlarge her understanding: and this, not in the spirit of vanity,

94 *On Politeness and Accomplishments.*

vanity, but in the innocent and laudable view of rendering herself more useful and pleasing to her fellow-creatures, and consequently more acceptable to God. Politeness of behaviour, and the attainment of such branches of knowledge and such arts and accomplishments as are proper to your sex, capacity, and station, will prove so valuable to yourself through life, and will make you so desirable a companion, that the neglect of them may reasonably be deemed a neglect of duty; since it is undoubtedly our duty to cultivate the powers entrusted to us, and to render ourselves as perfect as we can.

You

You must have often observed that nothing is so strong a recommendation on a slight acquaintance as *politeness*; nor does it lose its value by time or intimacy, when preserved, as it ought to be, in the nearest connections and strictest friendships. This delightful qualification — so universally admired and respected, but so rarely possessed in any eminent degree — cannot but be a considerable object of my wishes for you: nor should either of us be discouraged by the apprehension that neither I am capable of teaching, nor you of learning it, in *perfection* — since whatever degree
you

you attain will amply reward our pains.

To be perfectly polite, one must have great *presence of mind*, with a delicate and quick *sense of propriety*; or, in other words, one should be able to form an instantaneous judgment of what is fittest to be said or done, on every occasion as it offers. I have known one or two persons, who seemed to owe this advantage to nature only, and to have the peculiar happiness of being born, as it were, with another sense, by which they had an immediate perception of what was proper

proper and improper, in cases absolutely new to them : But this is the lot of very few : In general, propriety of behaviour must be the fruit of instruction, of observation, and reasoning ; and is to be cultivated and improved like any other branch of knowledge or virtue. A good temper is a necessary ground-work of it ; and, if to this is added a good understanding, applied industriously to this purpose, I think it can hardly fail of attaining all that is essential in it. Particular modes and ceremonies of behaviour vary in different countries, and even in different parts of the same town. These can only be

VOL. II. H learned

98 *On Politeness and Accomplishments.*

learned by observation on the manners of those who are best skilled in them, and by keeping what is called good company. But the principles of politeness are the same in all places. Wherever there are human beings, it must be impolite to hurt the temper or to shock the passions of those you converse with. It must every where be good-breeding, to set your companions in the most advantageous point of light, by giving each the opportunity of displaying their most agreeable talents, and by carefully avoiding all occasions of exposing their defects; — to exert your own endeavours to please, and to amuse, but

not to outshine them ; — to give each their due share of attention and notice — not engrossing the talk, when others are desirous to speak, nor, suffering the conversation to flag, for want of introducing something to continue or renew a subject ; — not to push your advantages in argument so far that your antagonist cannot retreat with honour ; — In short, it is an universal duty in society to consider others more than yourself — “ in honour preferring one another.” Christianity, in this rule, gives the best lesson of politeness ; yet judgement must be used in the application of it : Our humility must

not be strained so far as to distress those we mean to honour; we must not quit our proper rank, nor force others to treat us improperly; or to accept, what we mean as an advantage, against their wills.—We should be perfectly easy, and make others so if we can. But, this happy ease belongs perhaps to the last stage of perfection in politeness, and can hardly be attained till we are conscious that we know the rules of behaviour, and are not likely to offend against propriety. In a very young person, who has seen little or nothing of the world, this cannot be expected; but a real desire of obliging, and a respectful
atten-

attention, will in a great measure supply the want of knowledge, and will make every one ready to overlook those deficiencies, which are owing only to the want of opportunities to observe the manners of polite company. You ought not therefore to be too much depressed by the consciousness of such deficiencies, but endeavour to get above the shame of wanting what you have not had the means of acquiring. Nothing heightens this false shame, and the awkwardness it occasions, so much as vanity. The humble mind, contented to be known for what it is, and unembarrassed by the dread of

betraying its ignorance, is present to itself, and can command the use of understanding, which will generally preserve you from any great indecorum, and will secure you from that ridicule, which is the punishment of affectation rather than of ignorance. People of sense will never despise you, whilst you act naturally; but, the moment you attempt to step out of your own character, you make yourself an object of just ridicule.

Many are of opinion that a very young woman can hardly be too silent and reserved in company: and certainly, nothing is so disgusting

ing in youth as pertness and self-conceit. But, modesty should be distinguished from an awkward bashfulness, and silence should only be enjoined, when it would be forward and impertinent to talk. There are many proper opportunities for a girl, young even as you are, to speak in company, with advantage to herself; and, if she does it without conceit or affectation, she will always be more pleasing than those, who sit like statues without sense or motion. When you are silent, your looks should shew your attention and presence to the company: a respectful and earnest attention is the most delicate

kind of praise, and never fails to gratify and please. You must appear to be interested in what is said, and endeavour to improve yourself by it: if you understand the subject well enough to ask now and then a pertinent question, or if you can mention any circumstances relating to it that have not before been taken notice of, this will be an agreeable way of shewing your willingness to make a part of the company, and will probably draw a particular application to you, from some one or other. Then, when called upon, you must not draw back as unwilling to answer, nor confine yourself

self merely to *yes* or *no*, as is the custom of many young persons, who become intolerable burthens to the mistress of the house, whilst she strives in vain to draw them into notice and to give them some share in the conversation.

In your father's house it is certainly proper for you to pay civility to the guests, and to talk to them in your turn — with modesty and respect — if they encourage you to it. Young ladies of near your own age, who visit there, fall of course to your share to entertain. But, whilst you exert yourself to make their visit agreeable to them, you
must

must not forget what is due to the elder part of the company, nor, by whispering and laughing apart, give them cause to suspect, what is too often true, that they themselves are the subjects of your mirth. It is so shocking an outrage against society, to talk of, or laugh at any person in his own presence, that one would think it could only be committed by the vulgar. I am sorry however to say, that I have too often observed it amongst young ladies, who little deserved that title whilst they indulged their overflowing spirits, in defiance of decency and good-nature. The desire of laughing will make such in-

con-

considerate young persons find a subject of ridicule, even in the most respectable characters. Old age, which — if not disgraced by vice or affectation — has the justest title to reverence, will be mimicked and insulted; and even, personal defects and infirmities will too often excite contempt and abuse, instead of compassion. If you have ever been led into such an action, my dear girl, call it seriously to mind, when you are confessing your faults to Almighty God; and, be fully persuaded that it is not one of the least which you have to repent of. You will be immediately convinced of this, by comparing it with the great rule
of

of justice, that of doing to all as you would they should do unto you. No person living is insensible to the injury of contempt, nor is there any talent so invidious, or so certain to create ill will, as that of ridicule. The natural effects of years, which all hope to attain, and the infirmities of the body, which none can prevent, are surely of all others the most improper objects of mirth. There are subjects enough that are innocent, and on which you may freely indulge the vivacity of your spirits ; for I would not condemn you to perpetual seriousness — on the contrary, I delight in a joyous temper, at all
ages,

ages, and particularly at yours. Delicate and good-natured raillery amongst equal friends, if pointed only against such trifling errors as the owner can heartily join to laugh at, or such qualities as they do not pique themselves upon, is both agreeable and useful; but then it must be offered in perfect kindness and sincere good humour; if tinged with the least degree of malice, its sting becomes venomous and detestable. The person rallied should have liberty and ability to return the jest, which must be dropped upon the first appearance of its affecting the temper.

You

You will wonder perhaps, when I tell you that there are some characters in the world, which I would freely allow you to laugh at — tho' not in their presence. Extravagant vanity, and affectation, are the natural subjects of ridicule, which is their proper punishment. When you see old people, instead of maintaining the dignity of their years, struggling against nature to conceal them, affecting the graces, and imitating the follies of youth — Or a young person assuming the importance and solemnity of old age — I do not wish you to be insensible to the ridicule of such absurd deviations from truth and nature.

On Politeness and Accomplishments. III

ture. You are welcome to laugh, when you leave the company, provided you lay up a lesson for yourself at the same time, and remember, that unless you improve your mind whilst you are young, you also will be an insignificant fool in old age — and that, if you are presuming and arrogant in youth, you are as ridiculous as an old woman with a head-dress of flowers.

In a young lady's behaviour towards gentlemen, great delicacy is certainly required: yet, I believe, women oftener err from too great a consciousness of the supposed views of men than from inattention to those

those views, or want of caution against them. You are at present rather too young to want rules on this subject; but I could wish that you should behave almost in the same manner three years hence as now; and retain the simplicity and innocence of childhood, with the sense and dignity of riper years. Men of loose morals or impertinent behaviour must always be avoided: or, if at any time you are obliged to be in their company, you must keep them at a distance by cold civility. But, with regard to those gentlemen, whom your parents think it proper for you to converse with,

and who give no offence by their own manners, to them I wish you to behave with the same frankness and simplicity as if they were of your own sex. If you have natural modesty, you will never transgress its bounds, whilst you converse with a man, as one rational creature with another, without any view to the possibility of a lover or admirer, where nothing of that kind is profest; where it is, I hope, you will ever be equally a stranger to coquetry and prudery; and that you will be able to distinguish the effects of real esteem and love from idle gallantry and unmeaning fine speeches: the slighter notice you

take of these last, the better ; and that, rather with good-humour'd contempt, than with affected gravity : but, the first must be treated with seriousness and well-bred sincerity ; not giving the least encouragement, which you do not mean, nor assuming airs of contempt, where it is not deserved. But this belongs to a subject, which I have touched upon in a former letter. I have already told you that you will be unsafe in every step which leads to a serious attachment, unless you consult your parents, from the first moment you apprehend any thing of that sort to be intended : let them be your first confidants,

dants, and let every part of your conduct, in such a case, be particularly directed by them.

With regard to accomplishments, the chief of these is a competent share of reading, well chosen and properly regulated; and of this I shall speak more largely hereafter. Dancing and the knowledge of the French tongue are now so universal that they cannot be dispensed with in the education of a gentlewoman; and indeed they both are useful as well as ornamental; the first, by forming and strengthening the body, and improving the carriage; the second, by facilitating the intercourse with the French nation; and the knowledge of the French tongue is now so necessary to a gentleman, that it is almost indispensable to him. I 2

riage; the second, by opening a large field of entertainment and improvement for the mind. I believe there are more agreeable books of female literature in French than in any other language; and, as they are not less commonly talked of than English books, you must often feel mortified in company, if you are too ignorant to read them. Italian would be easily learnt after French, and, if you have leisure and opportunity, may be worth your gaining, though in your station of life it is by no means necessary.

To

To write a free and legible hand, and to understand common arithmetic, are indispensable requisites.

As to music and drawing, I would only wish you to follow as Genius leads: you have some turn for the first, and I should be sorry to see you neglect a talent, which will at least afford you an innocent amusement, though it should not enable you to give much pleasure to your friends: I think the use of both these arts is more for yourself than for others: it is but seldom that a private person has leisure or application enough to gain any high degree of excellence in

them; and your own partial family are perhaps the only persons who would not much rather be entertained by the performance of a professor than by yours: but, with regard to yourself, it is of great consequence to have the power of filling up agreeably those intervals of time, which too often hang heavily on the hands of a woman, if her lot be cast in a retired situation. Besides this, it is certain that even a small share of knowledge in these arts will heighten your pleasure in the performances of others: the taste must be improved before it can be susceptible of an exquisite relish for any of the

imitative arts: An unskilful ear is seldom capable of comprehending *Harmony*, or of distinguishing the most *delicate* charms of *Melody*. The pleasure of seeing fine paintings, or even of contemplating the beauties of Nature, must be greatly heighten'd by our being conversant with the rules of drawing, and by the habit of considering the most picturesque objects. As I look upon taste to be an inestimable fund of innocent delight, I wish you to lose no opportunity of improving it, and of cultivating in yourself the relish of such pleasures as will not interfere with a rational scheme of life, nor

lead you into dissipation, with all its attendant evils of vanity and luxury.

As to the learned languages, though I respect the abilities and application of those ladies, who have attained them, and who make a modest and proper use of them, yet I would by no means advise you — or any woman who is not strongly impell'd by a particular genius — to engage in such studies. The labour and time which they require are generally incompatible with our natures and proper employments: the real knowledge which they supply is not essential, since the English,
I French,

French, or Italian tongues afford tolerable translations of all the most valuable productions of antiquity, besides the multitude of original authors which they furnish; and these are much more than sufficient to store your mind with as many ideas as you will know how to manage. The danger of pedantry and presumption in a woman — of her exciting envy in one sex and jealousy in the other — of her exchanging the graces of imagination for the severity and preciseness of a scholar, would be, I own, sufficient to frighten me from the ambition of seeing my girl remarkable for learning. Such objections

jections are perhaps still stronger with regard to the abstruse sciences.

Whatever tends to embellish your fancy, to enlighten your understanding, and furnish you with ideas to reflect upon when alone, or to converse upon in company, is certainly well worth your acquisition. The wretched expedient, to which ignorance so often drives our sex, of calling in slander to enliven the tedious insipidity of conversation, would alone be a strong reason for enriching your mind with innocent subjects of entertainment,
which

which may render you a fit companion for persons of sense and knowledge, from whom you may reap the most desirable improvements: for, though I think reading indispensably necessary to the due cultivation of your mind, I prefer the conversation of such persons to every other method of instruction: but, this you cannot hope to enjoy, unless you qualify yourself to bear a part in such society, by, at least, a moderate share of reading.

Though *religion* is the most important of all your pursuits, there are not many *books* on that subject,
which

which I should recommend to you at present. Controversy is wholly improper at your age, and it is also too soon for you to enquire into the evidence of the truth of revelation, or to study the difficult parts of scripture: when these shall come before you, there are many excellent books, from which you may receive great assistance. At present, practical divinity — clear of superstition and enthusiasm — but addressed to the heart, and written with a warmth and spirit capable of exciting in it pure and rational piety, is what I wish you to meet with.

The

The principal study I would recommend, is *history*. I know of nothing equally proper to entertain and improve at the same time, or that is so likely to form and strengthen your judgment, and, by giving you a liberal and comprehensive view of human nature, in some measure to supply the defect of that experience, which is usually attained too late to be of much service to us. Let me add, that more materials for conversation are supplied by this kind of knowledge, than by almost any other; but I have more to say to you on this subject in a future letter.

The

126 *On Politeness and Accomplishments.*

The faculty, in which women usually most excel, is that of imagination; and, when properly cultivated, it becomes the source of all that is most charming in society. Nothing you can read will so much contribute to the improvement of this faculty as *poetry*; which, if applied to its true ends, adds a thousand charms to those sentiments of religion, virtue, generosity, and delicate tenderness, by which the human soul is exalted and refined. I hope, you are not deficient in natural taste for this enchanting art, but that you will find it one of your greatest pleasures

pleasures to be conversant with the best poets, whom our language can bring you acquainted with, particularly, those immortal ornaments of our nation, *Shakespear* and *Milton*. The first is not only incomparably the noblest genius in dramatic poetry, but the greatest master of nature, and the most perfect characteriser of men and manners: in this last point of view, I think him inestimable; and I am persuaded that, in the course of your life, you will seldom find occasion to correct those observations on human nature, and those principles of morality, which you may extract from

from his capital pieces. You will at first find his language difficult; but if you take the assistance of a friend, who understands it well, you will by degrees enter into his manner of phraseology and perceive a thousand beauties, which at first lay buried in obsolete words and uncouth constructions. The admirable *Essay on Shakespear*, which has lately appeared, so much to the honour of our sex, will open your mind to the peculiar excellencies of this author, and enlighten your judgment on dramatic poetry in general, with such force of reason and brilliancy of wit as cannot

cannot fail to delight as well as instruct you.

Our great English poet, Milton, is as far above my praise as his *Paradise Lost* is above any thing which I am able to read, except the sacred writers. The sublimity of his subject sometimes leads him into abstruseness; but many parts of his great poem are easy to all comprehensions, and must find their way directly to every heart by the tenderness and delicacy of his sentiments, in which he is not less strikingly excellent than in the richness and sublimity of his imagination. Addison's criticism in the

130 *On Politeness and Accomplishments.*

Spectators, written with that beauty, elegance, and judgment, which distinguish all his writings, will assist you to understand and to relish this poem.

It is needless to recommend to you the translations of Homer and Virgil, which every body reads that reads at all. You must have heard that Homer is esteemed the father of poetry, the original from whence all the moderns—not excepting Milton himself—borrow some of their greatest beauties, and from whom they extract those rules for composition, which are found most agreeable to nature and true taste.

taste. Virgil, you know, is the next in rank amongst the classics : You will read his Eneid with extreme pleasure, if ever you are able to read Italian, in Annibal Caro's translation ; the idiom of the Latin and Italian languages being more alike, it is, I believe, much closer, yet preserves more of the spirit of the original than the English translations.

For the rest, fame will point out to you the most considerable of our poets ; and I would not exclude any of name, among those whose morality is unexceptionable : but of poets, as of all other authors, I

132 *On Politeness and Accomplishments.*

wish you to read only such as are properly recommended to you—since there are many who debase their divine art, by abusing it to the purposes of vice and impiety. If you could read poetry with a judicious friend, who would lead your judgment to a true discernment of its beauties and defects, it would inexpressibly heighten both your pleasure and improvement. But, before you enter upon this, some acquaintance with the *Heathen Mythology* is necessary. I think that you must before now have met with some book under the title of *The Pantheon*: And, if once you know as much of the gods and goddesses

as

as the most common books on the subject will tell you, the rest may be learned by reading Homer: but then you must particularly attend to him in this view. I do not expect you to penetrate those numerous mysteries — those amazing depths of morality, religion, and metaphysics — which some pretend to have discovered in his mythology; but, to know the names and principal offices of the gods and goddesses, with some idea of their moral meaning, seems requisite to the understanding almost any poetical composition. As an instance of the *moral meaning* I speak of, I will mention an observation of Bossuet,

134 *On Politeness and Accomplishments.*

That Homer's poetry was particularly recommended to the Greeks by the superiority which he ascribes to them over the Asiatics; this superiority is shewn in the *Iliad*, not only in the conquest of Asia by the Greeks, and in the actual destruction of its capital, but in the division and arrangement of the gods, who took part with the contending nations. On the side of Asia was *Venus* — that is, sensual passion — pleasure — and effeminacy. On the side of Greece was *Juno* — that is, matronly gravity and conjugal love; together with *Mercury* — invention and eloquence — and *Jupiter* — or political wisdom. On the side of
Asia

Asia was *Mars*, who represents brutal valour and blind fury. On that of Greece was *Pallas* — that is military discipline, and bravery, guarded by judgment.

This, and many other instances that might be produced, will shew you how much of the beauty of the poet's art must be lost to you, without some notion of these allegorical personages. Boys, in their school-learning, have this kind of knowledge impressed on their minds by a variety of books; but women, who do not go through the same course of instruction, are very apt to forget what little they read or

hear on the subject:—I advise you therefore never to lose an opportunity of enquiring into the meaning of any thing you meet with in poetry, or in painting, alluding to the history of any of the heathen deities, and of obtaining from some friend an explanation of its connection with true history, or of its allegorical reference to morality or to physics.

Natural philosophy, in the largest sense of the expression, is too wide a field for you to undertake; but, the study of nature, as far as may suit your powers and opportunities, you will find a most sublime entertainment:

tainment: the objects of this study are all the stupendous works of the Almighty Hand that lie within the reach of our observation. In the works of man perfection is aimed at, but, it can only be found in those of the Creator. The contemplation of perfection must produce delight, and every natural object around you would offer this delight, if it could attract your attention: if you survey the earth, every leaf that trembles in the breeze, every blade of grass beneath your feet is a wonder as absolutely beyond the reach of human art to imitate as the construction of the universe. Endless pleasures, to those

138 *On Politeness and Accomplishments.*

those who have a taste for them, might be derived from the endless variety to be found in the composition of this globe and its inhabitants. The fossil—the vegetable—and the animal world—gradually rising in the scale of excellence—the innumerable species of each, still preserving their specific differences from age to age, yet of which no two individuals are ever perfectly alike—afford such a range for observation and enquiry as might engross the whole term of our short life if followed minutely. Besides all the animal creation obvious to our unassisted senses, the eye, aided by philosophical inventions, sees

sees myriads of creatures, which by the ignorant are not known to have existence: it sees all nature teem with life; every fluid—each part of every vegetable and animal—swarm with its peculiar inhabitants—invisible to the naked eye, but as perfect in all their parts, and enjoying life as indisputably, as the elephant or the whale.

But, if from the earth, and from these minute wonders, the philosophic eye is raised towards the Heavens, what a stupendous scene there opens to it's view!—those brilliant lights that sparkle to the eye of ignorance as gems adorning the sky,
or

or as lamps to guide the traveller by night, assume an importance that amazes the understanding!—they appear to be *worlds*, formed like ours for a variety of inhabitants—or *sun*s, enlightening numberless other worlds too distant for our discovery!—I shall ever remember the astonishment and rapture with which my mind received this idea, when I was about your age; it was then perfectly new to me, and it is impossible to describe the sensations I felt from the glorious, boundless prospect of infinite beneficence bursting at once upon my imagination!—Who can contemplate such a scene unmoved?—if your
6 curiosity

curiosity is excited to enter upon this noble enquiry, a few books on the subject, and those of the easiest sort, with some of the common experiments, may be sufficient for your purpose—which is to enlarge your mind, and to excite in it the most ardent gratitude and profound adoration towards that great and good Being, who exerts his boundless power in communicating various portions of happiness through all the immense regions of creation.

Moral philosophy, as it relates to human actions, is of still higher importance than the study of nature. The works of the ancients on this subject are universally said
to

to be entertaining as well as instructive, by those who can read them in their original languages; and such of them as are well translated will undoubtedly, some years hence, afford you great pleasure and improvement. You will also find many agreeable and useful books, written originally in French, and in English, on morals and manners: for the present, there are works, which, without assuming the solemn air of philosophy, will enlighten your mind on these subjects, and introduce instruction in an easier dress: of this sort are many of the moral essays, that have appeared in periodical papers—
which,

which, when excellent in their kind—as are the *Spectators*, *Guardians*, *Ramblers*, and *Adventurers*—are particularly useful to young people, as they comprehend a great variety of subjects—introduce many ideas and observations that are new to them—and lead to a habit of reflecting on the characters and events that come before them in real life, which I consider as the best exercise of the understanding.

Books on taste and criticism will hereafter be more proper for you than at present: whatever can improve your discernment, and render your taste elegant and just, must be

be of great consequence to your enjoyments as well as to the embellishment of your understanding.

I would by no means exclude the kind of reading, which young people are naturally most fond of; though I think the greatest care should be taken in the choice of those *fictitious stories*, that so enchant the mind—most of which tend to inflame the passions of youth, whilst the chief purpose of education should be to moderate and restrain them. Add to this, that both the writing and sentiments of most novels and romances are such as are only proper to vitiate
your

your stile, and to mislead your heart and understanding. The expectation of extraordinary adventures — which seldom ever happen to the sober and prudent part of mankind — and the admiration of extravagant passions and absurd conduct, are some of the usual fruits of this kind of reading; which, when a young woman makes it her chief amusement, generally renders her ridiculous in conversation, and miserably wrong-headed in her pursuits and behaviour. There are however works of this class, in which excellent morality is joined with the most lively pictures of the

146 *On Politeness and Accomplishments.*

human mind, and with all that can entertain the imagination and interest the heart. But, I must repeatedly exhort you, never to read any thing of the sentimental kind, without taking the judgment of your best friends in the choice; for, I am persuaded, that the indiscriminate reading of such kind of books corrupts more female hearts than any other cause whatsoever.

Before I close this correspondence, I shall point out the course of history I wish you to pursue, and give you my thoughts of geography and chronology, some know-

knowledge of both being, in my opinion, necessary to the reading of history with any advantage.

I am, my dearest niece,
your ever affectionate,

LETTER IX.

MY DEAR NIECE,

I HAVE told you that you will not be able to read history, with much pleasure or advantage, without some little knowledge of *Geography* and *Chronology*. They are both very easily attained — I mean

L 2

in

148 *On Geography and Chronology.*

in the degree that will be necessary for you. You must be sensible that you can know but little of a country, whose situation with respect to the rest of the world you are entirely ignorant of — and that, it is to little purpose that you are able to mention a fact, if you cannot nearly ascertain the *time* in which it happened, which alone, in many cases, gives importance to the fact itself.

In Geography — the easiest of all sciences, and the best adapted to the capacity of children—I suppose you to have made some beginning: to know at least the figure of the
earth

earth — the supposed lines — the degrees — how to measure distances — and a few of the common terms : If you do not already know these, two or three lessons will be sufficient to attain them : the rest is the work of memory, and is easily gained by reading with maps ; for I do not wish your knowledge to be exact and masterly — but such only as is necessary for the purpose of understanding history, and, without which, even a news-paper would be unintelligible. It may be sufficient for this end, if, with respect to *ancient* Geography, you have a general idea of the situation of all the great states, without being able

precisely to ascertain their limits. But, in the *modern*, you ought to know the bounds and extent of every state in Europe, and its situation with respect to the rest. The other parts of the world will require less accurate knowledge, except with regard to the European settlements.

It may be an useful and agreeable method, when you learn the situation of any important country, to join with that knowledge some one or two leading facts or circumstances concerning it, so that its particular property may always put you in mind of the situation, and

the situation, in like manner, recall the particular property. When, for instance, you learn in what part of the globe to find Ethiopia, to be told at the same time that, in that vast unknown tract of country, the Christian religion was once the religion of the state, would be of service — because the geographical and historical knowledge would assist each other. Thus, to join with Egypt, *the nurse and parent of arts and of superstition* — with Persia, *shocking despotism and perpetual revolutions* — with ancient Greece, *freedom and genius* — with Scythia, *hardiness and conquest*, are hints which you may make use of as you

please. Perhaps annexing to any country the idea of some familiar form which it most resembles may at first assist you to retain a general notion of it; thus Italy has been called a *boot* — and Europe compared to a *woman sitting*.

The difference of the ancient and modern names of places is somewhat perplexing; the most important should be known by both names at the same time, and you must endeavour to fix a few of those which are of most consequence so strongly in your mind, by thinking of them, and being often told of them, that the ancient

name shall always call up the modern one to your memory, and the modern the ancient: Such as the Egean Sea, now *The Archipelago*—The Peloponnesus, now *The Morea*—Crete, *Candia*—Gaul, *France*—Babylon, *Bagdat*—Byzantium—to which the Romans transplanted their seat of empire—*Constantinople*, &c.

There have been so many ingenious contrivances to make geography easy and amusing, that I cannot hope to add any thing of much service; I would only prevail with you not to neglect acquiring, by whatever method pleases you best,
that

154 *On Geography and Chronology.*

that share of knowledge in it, which you will find necessary, and which is so easily attained; and I intreat that you would learn it in such a manner as to fix it in your mind, so that it may not be lost and forgotten among other childish acquisitions, but that it may remain ready for use through the rest of your life.

Chronology indeed has more of difficulty; but, if you do not bewilder yourself by attempting to learn too much and too minutely at first, you need not despair of gaining enough for the purpose of reading history with pleasure and utility.

Chrono.

Chronology may be naturally divided into three parts, *the Ancient* — *the Middle* — and *the Modern*. —

With respect to all these, the best direction that can be given is to fix on some periods or epochas, which, by being often mentioned and thought of, explained and referred to, will at last be so deeply engraven on the memory, that they will be ready to present themselves whenever you call for them : these indeed should be few, and ought to be well chosen for their importance, since they are to serve as elevated stations to the mind, from which it may look backwards and forwards upon a great variety of facts.

Till

56 *On Geography and Chronology.*

Till your more learned friends shall supply you with better, I will take the liberty to recommend the following, which I have found of service to myself.

In the ancient chronology, you will find there were four thousand years from the creation to the redemption of man — and that Noah and his family were miraculously preserved in the ark 1650 years after Adam's creation.

As there is no history, except that in the Bible, of any thing before the flood, we may set out from that great event, which happened, as I have

have said above, in the year of the world 1650.

The 2350 years, which passed from the deluge to our Saviour's birth, may be thus divided.—There have been four successive *Empires* called *Universal*, because they extended over a great part of the then known world — these are usually distinguished by the name of *The Four Great Monarchies*: the three first of them are included in ancient chronology, and begun and ended in the following manner:

1st, THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE,
founded by Nimrod in the year of
the

158 *On Geography and Chronology.*

the world 1800, ended under Sardanapalus in 3250, endured 1450 years.

The Median — though not accounted one of the four great monarchies, being conquests of rebels on the Assyrian empire — comes in here for about 200 years.

2d, THE PERSIAN EMPIRE, which began under Cyrus, in the year of the world 3450, ended in Darius in 3670, before Christ 330, lasted a little more than 200 years.

3d, THE GRECIAN EMPIRE, begun under Alexander the Great in 3670,

3670, was soon after his death dismembered by his successors, but the different parcels into which they divided it were possessed by their respective families, till the famous Cleopatra, the last of the race of Ptolemy, one of Alexander's captains who reigned in Egypt, was conquered by Julius Cæsar, about half a century before our Lord's birth, which is a term of about 300 years.

Thus you see that from the deluge to the establishment of the first great monarchy — the Assyrian — is

360 *On Geography and Chronology.*

— is - - - - -	150 years
The Affyrian empire	
continued - - - -	1450
The Median - - - -	200
The Persian - - - -	200
The Grecian - - - -	300
From Julius Cesar, with whom began the fourth great monar- chy — viz. the Ro- man—to Christ - -	50

In all - - 2350 years.

The term from the deluge to Christ.

I do not give you these dates and periods as correctly true, for I have taken only round numbers as more easily retained by the memory ; so
that

that when you come to consult chronological books or tables, you will find variances of some years between them and the above accounts; but precise exactness is not material to a beginner.

I offer this short table as a little specimen of what you may easily do for yourself; but even this sketch, slight as it is, will give you a general notion of the ancient history of the world, from the deluge to the birth of Christ.

Within this period flourished the Grecian and Roman republics, with the history and chronology of which it will be expected you should be

tolerably well acquainted ; and indeed you will find nothing in the records of mankind so entertaining. Greece was divided into many petty states, whose various revolutions and annals you can never hope distinctly to remember ; you are therefore to consider them as forming together one great kingdom — like the Germanic body, or the united provinces — composed separately of different governments, but sometimes acting with united force for their common interest. The *Lacedemonian* government, formed by Lycurgus in the year of the world 3100 — and the *Athenian*, regulated by Solon about the year 3440 — will chiefly engage your attention.

In

In pursuing the *Grecian* chronology, you need only perhaps make one stand or *Epoche* — at the time of *Socrates*, that wisest of philosophers, whom you must have heard of — who lived about 3570 years from the creation, and about 430 before Christ: for within the term of 150 years *before* *Socrates*, and 200 *after* him, will fall in most of the great events and illustrious characters of the *Grecian* history.

I must inform you that the *Grecian* method of dating time was by *Olympiads* — that is four complete years — so call'd from the celebration, every fifth year, of the

M 2 Olympic

Olympic Games, which were contests in all the manly exercises, such as wrestling — boxing — running — chariot-racing, &c. — They were instituted in honour of Jupiter, and took their name from Olympia, a city of Elis, near which they were perform'd: they were attended by all ranks of people, from every state in Greece; the noblest youths were eager to obtain the prize of victory, which was no other than an olive crown, but esteem'd the most distinguishing ornament. These games continued all the time that Greece retained any spark of liberty; and with them begins the authentic history

tory of that country — all before being consider'd as fabulous. You must therefore endeavour to remember that they began in the year of the world 3228 — after the flood 1570 years—after the destruction of Troy 400 — before the building of Rome 23—before Cyrus about 200 — and 770 before Christ. If you cannot retain *all* these dates, at least you must not fail to remember the near coincidence of the first *Olympiad* with the *building of Rome*, which is of great consequence, because, as the Grecians reckoned time by Olympiads, the Romans dated from the building of their city: and as these two Eras are within 23 years of each other, you may,

M 3

for

for the ease of memory, suppose them to begin together, in the year of the world 3228.

In reading the history of the *Roman Republic* — which continued in that form of government to the time of Julius Cesar's dictatorship, about the year of the world 3960, and about 48 years before Christ — you will make as many epochas as you shall find convenient: I will mention only two — the sacking of Rome by the Gauls, which happen'd in the year of the world 3620 — in the 365th year of the city — in the 97th Olympiad — before Christ 385 — and about 30

7 years

years before the birth of Alexander. The second epocha may be the 608th year of the city — when, after three obstinate wars, Carthage was destroy'd, and Rome was left without a rival.

Perhaps the following bad verses, which were given me when I was young, may help to fix in your mind the important Eras of the Roman and Grecian dates: — You must not laugh at them, for chronologers do not pique themselves on their Poetry, but they make use of numbers and rhymes merely as assistants to memory, being so easily learn'd by heart.

M 4

“ Rome

“Rome and Olmpiads bear the
 “same date,
 “Three thousand two hundred and
 “twenty-eight.
 “In * three hundred and sixty
 “was Rome sack’d and torn,
 “Thirty summers before Alexan-
 “der was born.”

You will allow that what I have
 said in these few pages is very
 easily learn’d — yet, little as it is,
 I will venture to say that, was
 you as perfectly mistress of it as
 of your alphabet, you might
 answer several questions relat-

* That is, in the 365th year of the city.

ing

ing to ancient Chronology more readily than many who pretend to know something of this science. One is not so much required to tell the precise year, in which a great man lived, as to know with whom he was cotemporary in other parts of the world.—I would know then, from the slight sketch above given, about what year of the Roman republic Alexander the Great lived. — You would quickly run over in your mind, “ Alexander lived in “ the 3670th year of the world — “ 330 before Christ—consequently “ he must have flourished about the “ 400th of Rome, which had endured 750 years when Christ “ was

4

“was born.” Or, suppose it was asked, what was the condition of Greece, at the time of the sacking of Rome by the Gauls; had any particular state, or the united body, chosen then to take advantage of the misfortunes of the Romans?—You consider that the 365th year of the city—the date of that event—is 385 before Christ; consequently this must have happened about the time of Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander, when the Grecians, under such a leader, might have extirpated the Roman nation from the earth, had they ever heard of them, or thought the conquest of them an object worthy their ambition.

Num.

Numberless questions might be answered in like manner, even on this very narrow circumscribed plan, if it was completely mastered. I might require that other periods or epochas should be learned with the same exactness — but these may serve to explain my meaning, and to shew you how practicable and easy it is. One thing, however, I must observe—though perhaps it is sufficiently obvious — which is, that you can make no use of this sketch of ancient Chronology, nor even hope to retain it, till you have read the ancient *history*. When you have gone through Rollin's *Histoire Ancienne* *once*,
then

172 *On Geography and Chronology.*

then will be the time to fix the ancient Chronology deep in your mind, which will very much enhance the pleasure and use of reading it a *second* time ; for you must remember that nobody reads a history to much purpose, who does not go over it more than once.

When you have got through your course of ancient history, and are come to the more modern, you must then have recourse to the second of the three divisions — viz. *middle Chronology*; containing about 800 years, from the birth of our Lord, and from within 50 years of the
the

the rise of the Roman empire, to Charlemagne, who died in 814.

This period, except in the earliest part of it, is too much involved in obscurity to require a very minute knowledge of its history — it may be sufficient to fix two or three of the most singular circumstances, by their proper dates.

The first epocha to be observed is the year of our Lord 330—when Constantine, the first Christian emperor, who restored peace to the oppressed and persecuted church, removed the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, called afterwards
from

from him Constantinople. After his time—about the year 400—began those irruptions of the Goths and Vandals, and other northern nations, who settled themselves all over the western parts of the Roman empire, and laid the foundation of the several states which now subsist in Europe.

The next epocha is the year 622—for the ease of memory say 600—when Mahomet, by his successful imposture, became the founder of the Saracen empire, which his followers extended over a great part of Asia and Africa, and over some provinces of Europe. — At the

the same time, St. Gregory, bishop of Rome, began to assume a spiritual power, which grew by degrees into that absolute and enormous dominion, so long maintained by the popes over the greatest part of Christendom. St. Augustine—a missionary from St. Gregory—about this time, began the conversion of Great Britain to Christianity.

The third and concluding epocha in this division is the year 800; when Charlemagne, king of France—after having subdued the Saxons, repressed the Saracens, and established the temporal dominion
of

of the pope by a grant of considerable territories — was elected emperor of the west and protector of the church. The date of this event corresponds with that remarkable period of our English history — the union of the Heptarchy — or seven kingdoms — under Egbert.

As to the *third* part of chronology — namely the *Modern*, I shall spare you and myself all trouble about it at present ; for, if you follow the course of reading which I shall recommend, it will be some years before you reach modern history — and, when you do, you will easily make periods for yourself, if
you

you do but remember carefully to examine the dates as you read, and to impress on your memory those of very remarkable reigns or events.

I fear you are by this time tired of Chronology; but, my sole intention in what I have said is to convince you that it is a science not out of your reach, in the moderate degree that is requisite for you: *the last volume of the Ancient Universal History* is the best English Chronological work I know; if that does not come in your way, there is an excellent French one, called *Tablettes Chronologiques de l'Histoire Universelle*,

Du Fresnoy, 3 vols. Paris—there is also a *chart* of universal history, including Chronology—and a *Biographical* chart — both by Priestly — which you may find of service to you.

Indeed, my dear, a woman makes a poor figure who affects, as I have heard some ladies do, to disclaim all knowledge of times and dates: the strange confusion they make of events, which happened in different periods, and the stare of ignorance when such are referred to as are commonly known, are sufficiently pitiable: but the highest mark of folly is to be proud of such

such ignorance—a resource in which
some of our sex find great conso-
lation.

Adieu, my dear child! — I am,
with the tenderest affection,

ever yours.

LETTER X.

MY DEAR NIECE,

WHEN I recommend to you
to gain some insight into
the general history of the world,

perhaps you will think I propose a formidable task ; but, your apprehensions will vanish, when you consider that of near half the globe we have no histories at all ; — that, of other parts of it, a few facts only are known to us—and that, even of those nations, which make the greatest figure in history, the early ages are involved in obscurity and fable : it is not indeed allowable to be totally ignorant even of those fables, because they are the frequent subjects of poetry and painting, and are often referred to in more authentic histories.

The first recorders of actions are generally poets : in the historical songs

songs of the bards are found the only accounts of the first ages of every state ; but in these we must naturally expect to find truth mixed with fiction, and often disguised in allegory. In such early times, before science has enlightened the minds of men, the people are ready to believe every thing — and the historian, having no restraints from the fear of contradiction or criticism, delivers the most improbable and absurd tales as an account of the lives and actions of their forefathers : thus the first heroes of every nation are gods, or the sons of gods ; and every great event is accompanied with some supernatu-

ral agency. Homer, whom I have already mentioned as a poet, you will find the most agreeable historian of the early ages of Greece — and Virgil will shew you the supposed origin of the Carthaginians and Romans.

It will be necessary for you to observe some regular plan in your historical studies, which can never be pursued with advantage otherwise than in a continued series. I do not mean to confine you solely to that kind of reading — on the contrary, I wish you frequently to relax with poetry or some other amusement, whilst you are pursuing

4

ing

ing your course of history; I only mean to warn you against mixing *ancient* history with *modern*, or *general* histories of one place with *particular reigns* in another — by which desultory manner of reading, many people distract and confound their memories, and retain nothing to any purpose from such a confused mass of materials.

The most ancient of all histories, you will read in your Bible: from thence you will proceed to *L'Histoire Ancienne* of Rollin, who very ingeniously points out the connection of prophane with sacred history, and enlivens his nar-

rative with many agreeable and improving reflections — and many very pleasing detached stories and anecdotes, which may serve you as resting places in your journey. It would be an useful exercise of your memory and judgment, to recount these interesting passages to a friend, either by letter or in conversation; not in the words of the author, but in your own natural stile — by memory and not by book; and to add whatever remarks may occur to you. I need not say that you will please me much, whenever you are disposed to make this use of *me*.

The

The want of memory is a great discouragement in historical pursuits, and is what every body complains of. Many artificial helps have been invented, of which, those who have tried them can best tell you the effects: but the most natural and pleasant expedient is that of conversation with a friend, who is acquainted with the history which you are reading. By such conversations, you will find out how much is usually retained of what is read, and you will learn to select those characters and facts which are best worth preserving: for, it is by trying to remember every thing without distinction, that young people

people are so apt to lose every trace of what they read. By repeating to your friend what you can recollect, you will fix it in your memory; and, if you should omit any striking particular, which ought to be retained, that friend will remind you of it, and will direct your attention to it on a second perusal. It is a good rule, to cast your eye each day over what you read the day before, and to look over the contents of every book when you have finished it.

Rollin's work takes in a large compass — but, of all the ancient nations it treats of, perhaps there are
only

only the Grecians and Romans, whose stories ought to be read with any anxious desire of retaining them perfectly : for the rest—such as the Assyrians, Egyptians, &c. — I believe, you would find, on examination, that most of those, who are supposed tolerably well read in history, remember no more than a few of the most remarkable facts and characters. I tell you this to prevent your being discouraged on finding so little remain in your mind after reading these less interesting parts of ancient history.

But, when you come to the Grecian and Roman stories, I expect to find

find you deeply interested and highly entertained ; and, of consequence, eager to treasure up in your memory those heroic actions and exalted characters, by which a young mind is naturally so much animated and impressed. As Greece and Rome were distinguished as much for genius as valour, and were the theatres, not only of the greatest military actions — the noblest efforts of liberty and patriotism — but of the highest perfection of arts and sciences, their immortal fame is a subject of wonder and emulation, even to these distant ages ; and, it is thought a shameful degree of ignorance, even
in

in our sex, to be unacquainted with the nature and revolutions of their governments, and with the characters and stories of their most illustrious heroes. — Perhaps, when you are told that the government and the national character of your own countrymen have been compared with those of the Romans, it may not be an useless amusement, in reading the Roman History, to carry this observation in your mind, and to examine how far the parallel holds good. The French have been thought to resemble the Athenians in their Genius, though not in their love of liberty. These little hints sometimes serve to awaken

ken reflection and attention in young readers—I leave you to make what use of them you please.

When you have got through Rollin, if you add *Vertot's Revolutions Romaines* — a short, and very entertaining work—you may be said to have read as much as is *absolutely necessary* of ancient history. Plutarch's *Lives of famous Greeks and Romans*—a book deservedly of the highest reputation — can never be read to so much advantage as immediately after the histories of Greece and Rome: I should even prefer reading each life in Plutarch, immediately after the history of each parti-

particular Hero, as you meet with them in Rollin or in Vertot.

If hereafter you should choose to enlarge your plan, and should wish to know more of any particular people or period than you find in Rollin, the sources from which he drew may be open to you—for there are, I believe, French or English translations of all the original historians, from whom he extracted his materials.

to Crevier's continuation of Rollin, I believe, gives the best account of the Roman emperors down to Constantine. What shocking instances, will

will you there meet with, of the terrible effects of lawless power on the human mind!—How will you be amazed to see the most promising characters changed by flattery and self-indulgence into monsters that disgrace humanity!—to read a series of such lives as those of Tiberius, Nero, or Domitian, would be intolerable, were we not consoled by the view of those excellent emperors, who remained uncorrupted through all temptations. When the mind — disgusted, depressed, and terrified — turns from the contemplation of those depths of vice, to which the human nature may be sunk, a Titus, the delight
of

of mankind—a Trajan—an Antoninus—restore it to an exulting sense of the dignity, to which that nature may be exalted by virtue. Nothing is more awful than this consideration: a human creature given up to vice is infinitely below the most abject brute: the same creature, trained by virtue to the utmost perfection of his nature, is “but a little lower than the angels, “and is crowned with glory and “immortality.”

Before you enter upon the modern history of any particular kingdom, it will be proper to gain some idea of that interval between an-

cient and modern times, which is justly called the dark and barbarous ages — and which lasted from Constantine to Charlemagne—perhaps one might say to some centuries after. On the irruption of the northern Barbarians, who broke the Roman empire, and dissipated all the treasures of knowledge, as well as of riches, which had been so long accumulating in that enormous state, the European world may be said to have returned to a second infancy; and the Monkish legends, which are the only records preserved of the times in which they were written, are not less fabulous than the tales of the demi-gods.

I must

I must profess myself ignorant how to direct you to any distinct or amusing knowledge of the history of Europe during this period : — some collect it from *Puffendorf's Introduction* — some from *The Universal History* — and now, perhaps, with more advantage and delight, from the first volume of *Robertson's Charles the Fifth*, in which he traces the progress of civilization, government, and arts, from the first settlements of the Barbarians ; and shews the foundation of the several states, into which Europe is now divided, and of those laws, customs, and politics, which prevail in this quarter of the world.

In these dark ages, you will find no single character so interesting as that of Mahomet—that bold impostor, who extended his usurped dominion equally over the minds and properties of men, and propagated a new religion, whilst he founded a new empire, over a large portion of the globe. His life has been written by various hands.

When you come to the particular histories of the European states, your own country seems to demand the precedence; and, there is no part more commodious to set out from, since you cannot learn the history of Great Britain, without becoming in
some

some degree acquainted with almost every neighbouring nation, and without finding your curiosity excited to know more of those, with whom we are most connected.

By the amazing progress of navigation and commerce, within the last two or three centuries, all parts of the world are now connected: the most distant people are become well acquainted, who, for thousands of years, never heard of one another's existence: we are still every day exploring new regions—and every day see greater reason to expect that immense countries may

yet be discovered, and America no longer retain the name of the *New World*. You may pass to every quarter of the earth, and find yourself still in the British dominion; this island, in which we live, is the least portion of it; and, if we were to adopt the stile of ancient conquerors, we might call it the throne, from which we rule the world. To this boast we are better entitled than some of those who formerly called themselves *Masters of the Globe*, as we possess an empire of greater extent, and, from the superior advantages of our commerce, much greater power and riches;—

but, we have now too many rivals

in

in dominion, to take upon us such haughty titles.

You cannot be said to know the history of that empire, of which you are a subject, without knowing something of the East and West Indies, where so great a part of it is situated: and you will find the accounts of the discovery and conquest of America very entertaining, tho' you will be shocked at the injustice and cruelty of its conquerors. But, with which of the glorious conquerors of mankind must not humanity be shocked! — Ambition, the most remorseless of all passions, pursues its object by all sorts of means:

justice, mercy, truth, and every thing most sacred, in vain oppose its progress!—alas, my dear, shall I venture to tell you that the history of the world is little else than a shocking account of the wickedness and folly of the ambitious!—The world has ever been, and, I suppose, ever must be, governed and insulted by these aspiring spirits — it has always, in a greater or less degree, groaned under their unjust usurpation.

But let not the horror of such a scene put a stop to your curiosity: it is proper you should know mankind as they are: You must be acquainted

acquainted with the heroes of the earth, and perhaps you may be too well reconciled to them: Mankind have in general a strong bias in their favour; we see them surrounded with pomp and splendour — every thing that relates to them has an air of grandeur — and, whilst we admire their natural powers, we are too apt to pardon the detestable abuse of them, to the injury and ruin of the human race. We are dazzled with false glory, and willingly give into the delusion;—for mighty conquests, like great conflagrations, have something of the sublime that pleases the imagination, though we know, if we reflect

flect at all, that the consequences of them are devastation and misery.

The Western and Eastern world will present to you very different prospects. In *America*, the first European conquerors found nature in great simplicity; society still in its infancy — and consequently the arts and sciences yet unknown: so that the facility, with which they overpowered these poor innocent people, was entirely owing to their superior knowledge in the arts of destroying. They found the inhabitants brave enthusiastic patriots, but without either the military or political

tical arts necessary for their defence. The two great kingdoms of Mexico and Peru had alone made some progress in civilization; they were both formed into regular states, and had gained some order and discipline: from these therefore the Spaniards met with something like an opposition. At first indeed the invaders appeared supernatural beings, who came upon them flying over the ocean, on the wings of the wind, and who, mounted on fiery animals, unknown in that country, attacked them with thunder and lightning in their hands — for such the fire arms of the Spaniards appeared

ed

ed to this astonished people. But, from being worshiped as gods, they soon came to be feared as evil spirits; and in time being discovered to be men—different from the Americans only in their outrageous injustice, and in the cruel arts of destroying—they were abhorred and boldly opposed. The resistance however of a million of these poor naked people, desperately crouding on each other to destruction, served only to make their ruin more complete. The Europeans have destroyed, with the most shocking barbarity, many millions of the original inhabitants of these countries, and

and have ever since been depopulating Europe and Africa to supply their places.

Though our own countrymen have no reason to boast of the justice and humanity of their proceedings in America, yet, in comparison with those of the Spaniards, our possessions there were innocently acquired. Some of them were gained by conquest, or cession, from Spain and from other European powers—Some by contract with the natives, or by settlements on uninhabited lands. We are now possessed of a series of colonies, extending

tending above two thousand miles along the whole Eastern coast of North America, besides many islands of immense value. These countries, instead of being thinly peopled by a few hords of ignorant savages, are now adorned with many great cities, and innumerable rich plantations, which have made ample returns to their mother country, for the dangers and expences which attended their first establishment. Blest with more natural advantages than almost any country in the world, they are making a swift progress in wealth and grandeur, and seem likely, in some future

ture

ture period, to be as much the seat of empire and of science as Europe is at present. Whether their attainments in virtue and happiness will keep pace with their advancement in knowledge, wealth, and power, is much to be questioned; for you will observe, in your historical view of the several great empires of the world, that as each grew up towards the highest pitch of greatness, the seeds of destruction grew up with it; luxury and vice, by debasing the minds, and enervating the bodies of the people, left them all, in their turns, an easy prey to poorer and more valiant nations.

In

In the East, the Europeans introduced themselves in a milder way: admitted first as traders — and, for the more commodious carrying on their commerce, indulged by the powers of the country, in establishing a few small factories — they by gentle degrees extended and strengthened their settlements there, till their force became considerable enough to be thought an useful auxiliary to contending princes; and — as it has often happened to those who have called in foreign powers to interfere in their domestic contentions — by availing themselves of the disturbances of a dismembered monarchy, they at length

raised a power, almost independant of their employers. Soon, the several European nations, who had thus got footing in the Indies, jealous of each other's growing greatness, made the feuds of the native princes subservient to their mutual contests — till within a few years, the English, by a happy concurrence of circumstances, obtained the mastery, and expell'd their rivals from all their considerable settlements.

The rapidity of our conquests here has been perhaps equal to that of the first invaders of America — but from different causes. Here we found an old establish'd

empire advanced to its crisis ; the magnificence and luxury of the great carried to the highest excess—and the people in a proportionable degree of oppression and debasement. Thus ripe for destruction, the rivalships of the vice-roys, from the weakness of the government, become independant sovereigns — and the dastardly spirit of the meaner people—indifferent to the cause for which they were compelled to fight — encouraged these ambitious merchants to push their advantages farther than they could at first have supposed possible : with astonishment they saw the intrepid leaders of a few hundreds of brave free Britons boldly oppose

oppose and repeatedly put to flight millions of these effeminate Indian slaves — and, in a short time, raise for them an empire much larger than their Mother Country.

From these remote quarters of the world, let us now return to Great Britain, with the history of which, you ought certainly to acquaint yourself, before you enter upon that of any other European kingdom. If you have courage and industry enough to begin so high as the invasion of Julius Cæsar — before which nothing is known of the inhabitants of this island — you may set out with Rapi-

liam the Conqueror. From this era there are other histories of England more entertaining than his, tho', I believe, none esteem'd more authentic. Party so strongly influences both historians and their readers, that it is a difficult and invidious task to point out the *best* amongst the number of English histories that offer themselves: but, as *you* will not read with a critical view, nor enter deeply into politics, I think you may be allow'd to choose that which is most entertaining; and, in this view, I believe the general voice will direct you to Hume, tho' he goes no farther than the Revolution. Among other *historians*, do
not

not forget my darling *Shakespear*—
a faithful as well as a most agreeable
one—whose historical plays, if read
in a series, will fix in your memory
the reigns he has chosen, more
durably than any other history.
You need not fear his leading you
into any material mistakes, for he
keeps surprizingly close to the
truth, as well in the characters as
in the events. One cannot but
wish he had given us a play on
the reign of every English King—
as it would have been the plea-
santest, and perhaps the most use-
ful way of becoming acquainted
with it.

For the other portion of Great
P 3 Britain,

Britain, Robertson's History of Scotland is a delightful work, and of a moderate size.

Next to your own country, *France* will be the most interesting object of your enquiries; our ancient possessions in that country, and the frequent contests we have been engaged in with its inhabitants, connect their history with our own. The extent of their dominion and influence — their supposed superiority in elegance and politeness — their eminence in the Arts and Sciences — and that intercourse of thought, if I may so call it, which subsists between us, by the mutual communication
4 of

of literary productions—make them peculiarly interesting to us; and we cannot but find our curiosity excited to know their story, and to be intimately acquainted with the character, genius, and sentiments of this nation.

I do not know of any general history of France that will answer your purpose except that of *Mezerai*, which, even in the abridgement, is a pretty large work; there is a very modern one by *Velly*, and others, which perhaps may be more lively, but is still more voluminous, and not yet compleated. From *Mezerai*, you

P 4

may

may proceed with Voltaire to the end of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth.

In considering the rest of Europe, your curiosity may be confined within narrower limits. Modern history is, from the nature of it, much more minute and laborious than the ancient — and to pursue that of so many various kingdoms and governments would be a task unequal to your leisure and abilities, at least for several years to come; at the same time, it must be owned that the present system of politics and commerce has form'd such a relation between the different powers of Europe, that they

they are in a manner members of one great body, and a total ignorance of any considerable state would throw an obscurity even upon the affairs of your own country: an acquaintance however with the most remarkable circumstances, that distinguish the principal governments, will sufficiently enlighten you, and will enable you to comprehend, whatever relates to them, in the histories with which you are more familiar. Instead of referring you for this purpose to dull and uninteresting abridgements, I choose rather to point out to you a few small Tracts, which exhibit striking and lively pictures, not

8 easily

easily effaced from the memory,
of the constitutions and the most
remarkable transactions of several
of these nations. Such are

Sir William Temple's Essay on the
United Provinces.

His Essay on Heroic Virtue, which
contains some account of the
Saracen Empire.

Vertot's *Revolutions de Suede*.

————— *de Portugal*.

Voltaire's *Charles 12 de Suede*.

————— *Pierre le Grand*.

Puffendorf's Account of the Popes,
in his Introduction to Modern
History.

Some part of the History of
Germany

Germany and Spain, you will see more in detail in Robertson's History of Charles the Vth, which I have already recommended to you, in another view.

After all this, you may still be at a loss for the transactions of Europe, in the last fifty years; for the purpose of giving you, in a very small compass, some idea of the state of affairs during that period, I will venture to recommend one book more — *Campbell's State of Europe*.

Thus much may suffice for that moderate scheme, which I think is best suited to your sex and age. There are several excellent histories,

ries, and memoirs of particular reigns and periods, which I have taken no notice of in this circumscribed plan — but, with which, if you should happen to have a taste for the study, you will hereafter choose to be acquainted: these will be read with most advantage, after you have gained some general view of history — and they will then serve to refresh your memory, and settle your ideas distinctly, as well as enable you to compare different accounts of the persons and facts which they treat of, and to form your opinions of them on just grounds.

As I cannot, with certainty, foresee what degree of application or
genius

genius for such pursuits you will be mistress of, I shall leave the deficiencies of this collection to be supplied by the suggestions of your more informed friends — who, if you explain to them how far you wish to extend your knowledge, will direct you to the proper books.

But if, instead of an eager desire for this kind of knowledge, you should happen to feel that distaste for it, which is too common in young ladies, who have been indulged in reading only works of mere amusement, you will perhaps rather think that I want mercy in offering you so large a plan, than that there needs an apology for

for the deficiencies of it : but, comfort yourself with the assurance that a taste for history will grow and improve by reading : that as you get acquainted with one period or nation, your curiosity cannot fail to be awakened for what concerns those immediately connected with it ; and thus, you will insensibly be led on, from one degree of knowledge to another.

If you waste in trivial amusement the next three or four years of your life, which are the prime season of improvement, believe me, you will hereafter bitterly regret their loss : when you come to feel yourself inferior in knowledge to almost every
one

one you converse with—and, above all, if you should ever be a mother, when you feel your own inability to direct and assist the pursuits of your children:—you will then find ignorance a severe mortification and a real evil. Let this, my dear, animate your industry—and let not a modest opinion of your own capacity be a discouragement to your endeavours after knowledge; a moderate understanding, with diligent and well directed application, will go much farther than a more lively genius, if attended with that impatience and inattention, which too often accompanies quick parts. It is not from want of capacity that so many
women

women are such trifling insipid companions—so ill qualified for the friendship and conversation of a sensible man—or for the task of governing and instructing a family; it is much oftener from the neglect of exercising the talents, which they really have, and from omitting to cultivate a taste for intellectual improvement: by this neglect, they lose the sincerest of pleasures; a pleasure, which would remain when almost every other forsakes them—which neither fortune nor age can deprive them of—and which would be a comfort and resource in almost every possible situation of life.

If

If I can but inspire you, my dear child, with the desire of making the most of your time and abilities, my end is answered; the means of knowledge will easily be found by those who diligently seek them — and they will find their labours abundantly rewarded.

And now, my dear, I think it is time to finish this long correspondence — which, though in some parts it may have been tedious to you, will not, I hope, be found entirely useless in any. I have laid before you all that my maturest reflections could enable me to suggest, for the direction of your conduct

VOL. II.

Q

through

through life. My love for you, my dearest child, extends its views beyond this frail and transitory existence ; it considers you as a candidate for immortality—as entering the lists for the prize of your high calling—as contending for a crown of unfading glory. It sees, with anxious solicitude, the dangers that surround you, and the everlasting shame that must follow, if you do not exert all your strength in the conflict. Religion therefore has been the basis of my plan — the principle, to which every other pursuit is ultimately referred. Here then I have endeavoured to guide your researches, and to assist you
in

in forming just notions on a subject of such infinite importance. I have shewn you the necessity of regulating your heart and temper, according to the genuine spirit of that religion, which I have so earnestly recommended as the great rule of your life. To the same principle, I would refer your attention to domestic duties — and, even that refinement and elegance of manners, and all those graces and accomplishments, which will set your virtues in the fairest light, and will engage the affection and respect of all who converse with you. — Endeared to Society by these amiable qualities, your influence

in it will be more extensive, and your capacity of being useful proportionably enlarged. The studies, which I have recommended to you, must be likewise subservient to the same views ; the pursuit of knowledge, when it is guided and controul'd by the principles I have establish'd, will conduce to many valuable ends : the habit of industry, it will give you — the nobler kind of friendships, for which it will qualify you, and its tendency to promote a candid and liberal way of thinking, are obvious advantages. I might add, that a mind well informed in the various pursuits which interest mankind, and the
influence

influence of such pursuits on their happiness, will embrace, with a clearer choice, and will more steadily adhere to, those principles of Virtue and Religion, which the judgment must ever approve, in proportion as it becomes enlighten'd.

May those delightful hopes be answer'd which have animated my heart, while with diligent attention I have endeavour'd to apply to your advantage all that my own experience and best observation could furnish. With what joy should I see my dearest girl shine forth a bright example of every thing that is amiable and praiseworthy!

230 *On the Manner and Course, &c*

worthy! — and how sweet would be the reflection that I had, in any degree, contributed to make her so! — My heart expands with the affecting thought, and pours forth in this adieu the most ardent wishes for your perfection! — If the tender solicitude express'd for your welfare by this “labour of love” can engage your gratitude, you will always remember how deeply your conduct interests the happiness of

Your most affectionate Aunt.

THE END,



d
y
r
e
h
es
e
ur
e
ll
ur

st.